

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

PROFESSOR KARL BARTH has contributed a characteristic volume to the 'Challenge' series published by Messrs. James Clarke & Co. It is called *The Church and the Churches*, and certainly answers to the name of the series. There are four chapters in the book, and the subject is Church union or Church unity, and how it is to be achieved. 'Achieved' is perhaps not the right word; for union is not to be *made*. It is only to be *found*, since the only union or unity that is Christian is created by the Lord Himself. But it can be recognized and accepted by us on the right conditions. There is a good deal in the working out of this idea that is worth considering, for the argument is both brusque and challenging.

Dr. BARTH deals first with the motives that raise the question of union. There is the dissipation of spiritual and material energies in mission work that arises from the fact that there is not one Church but many confronting the 'heathen.' What a hindrance to the hearing of the message, what a bewilderment to the hearers, what a burden to serious minds is the spectacle of Churches in conflict with one another, says Dr. BARTH. Then again in the homeland the Church is confronted by all kinds of new creeds, all kinds of moral, social or political schemes for betterment, and, split up as it is into a multiplicity of bodies, the Church is unable to make good its claim to possess a loftier message than theirs. Further, the Church is hindered in its necessary duty of self-criticism and

reform by the lack of a unison of will and direction, and in its influence over its own members when faith is set against faith in this array of various bodies.

But above all other motives that compel us to seek for the unity of the Church is the task from which the Church derives its existence. This task emerges immediately from the fact that the one and only Word of God has once for all been uttered, for all men to heed, in the fact of the Incarnation. The task from which the Church derives its being is to proclaim that this has really happened, and to summon men to believe in its reality. The task as thus committed contemplates no multiplicity of Churches. The unity of the Church is the acknowledgment that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Mere 'unity' in itself is nothing. 'It is nothing but fallen human nature. It is a policy. It is idle and empty. The quest for the real unity of the Church is the quest for Jesus Christ as the concrete Head and Lord of the Church. Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and man is the oneness of the Church, is that unity within which there may be a multiplicity of gifts, of persons, while through it a multiplicity of Churches is excluded. We must not have 'unity' in our minds, we must have Him in our minds.

We are apt to justify the existence of separate Churches as manifesting the variety of views

men hold, as exhibiting various aspects of truth. Or, again, as unfolding the wealth of that grace which is given to mankind in Jesus Christ. The Roman, the Greek, the Lutheran, the Reformed Churches are regarded as having their special attributes and functions within an imagined organic totality. But, however well this may sound, it is not theology, it is mere sociology or philosophy of history. And it has no recognition from the New Testament. In fact we have no right to explain the multiplicity of Churches at all. We have to deal with it as we deal with sin, to recognize it as a fact that has intruded itself, as guilt which we must take upon ourselves, without the power to liberate ourselves from it.

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We would be doing a great deal for the unity of the Church if we would frankly recognize this. The only multiplicity that is Christian is that *within* the Church, namely, that of the local communities, of the gifts of the Spirit, of the believers of each sex, language, and race. It is unthinkable that to *those* multiplicities which are rooted in unity we should have to add that which tears it to pieces, unthinkable that great entire groups of communities should stand over against each other in such a way that their doctrines and confessions of faith are mutually contradictory, that what is called revelation in one place is called error in another, and that the ordinances of one group should be regarded as alien and unacceptable by another.

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If Jesus Christ is the unity of the Church, then the union of the Churches is a mandate imposed by their Lord. But the fulfilment of this mandate is wholly the work of Him who lays it upon us. In Him the Church *is* one, and does not await any desires, capacities, or labours of ours for its unification. Yet we have a share in this, not by virtue of any Christian activity of ours, but in faith in Jesus Christ. Let us remember that the union of the Church is not mere tolerance or civility. The idea of tolerance is not Christian. It is political and philosophical, and is not only alien but even opposed to the gospel. And moreover it is fruitless so far as union is concerned. It has never succeeded in removing the old separations, or even affecting them.

Nor is the idea of federation more hopeful or Christian. A mere federation, in itself, has nothing at all to do with real Church union. And we must say the same of the oecumenical movement. None of these expedients touches the real core of our problem. Church union is a *fact*. It cannot be manufactured, but must be found and confessed, in subordination to that already accomplished oneness of the Church which is in Jesus Christ. Let us not deceive ourselves. The union of the Churches would mean more than mutual respect or co-operation, more than understanding one another, more than common worship. It would mean a common faith, a union of the confessions into one unanimous confession.

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The way to it is listening to Christ. But we must hear Christ within the particular leading of the Church to which we owe allegiance. Dr. BARTH acknowledges that there is already a real oneness among people of diverse bodies, that there are real Christians to be found in all the Churches. And he points out that the unity of the Church will be realized as these people, in complete loyalty to their own Church, really listen to Christ 'in the terms of their own tradition and confession.' The Christ he means is not just any vague conception of the Lord but the Christ of those Scriptures which we all accept, the Christ in whom the sin of all men, their contradiction against God and their own inner self-contradiction, is done to death, taken away, forgiven, and exists no more. This is true Church unity, and only by the way of this faith will the Churches come to the oneness which is Christ Himself.

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The greatest stress is laid in our time upon the social implications of the gospel, and there is a strong tendency, as there has always been, to identify the Kingdom of God with the dominant political theory of the day.

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Now the dominant political theory of to-day runs in the direction of some form of collectivism. The system of individual ownership has fallen into



disesteem, and it is generally taken for granted that by a process at once inevitable and right all ownership will be assumed and all men's activities will be controlled by the State. There are many earnest Christian preachers and teachers who appear to regard some transition of this sort as being pretty much equivalent to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

On the other hand, the public mind has been gravely alarmed and shocked by what it has seen of collectivism in actual practice, whether in its Fascist or its Bolshevist form. It spells tyranny, both political and religious, a tyranny more intensive and effective than the world has ever known. It may be argued, of course, that a democratic country, in gradually moving in the direction of collectivism, may safeguard itself against such tyranny, but there is a very real danger that some irretrievable step may be taken even by popular vote which would put the lives and fortunes of the people into the power of a bureaucracy or dictatorship which might play the tyrant when once it was firmly seated in the saddle. These possibilities, upon which the well-being of nations depends, cannot be too seriously pondered.

The whole subject has received fresh and vigorous treatment in a book from the pen of Mr. Walter LIPPMANN, the well-known American humanist and ethical writer. The title is *The Good Society* (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). It is a book which deserves to be read and considered by all interested in social and political reform to whatever school they belong. The writer says that twenty years of study and three years of writing have gone into his book. The War and the revolutions which followed it swept him off his feet intellectually, and only after years of mental struggle has he found firm ground again on which to stand. He is aware that his conclusion runs counter to the current stream of political thought, but he pulls a very strong oar. If his voice be as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, it is at least a very powerful voice and one that will assuredly be heard far and wide. It may even prove to be the herald of national salvation.

Mr. LIPPMANN begins with an appeal to history. He asks by what process has our modern civilization been evolved. Undoubtedly the answer of history is, by a process of liberation, by progressively freeing the individual from the bonds that fettered and enslaved him. The power of kings and lords was curtailed, monopolies and taxes which hindered the freedom of trade were abolished, and the rights of the common man to think his own thoughts and live his own life were asserted. The general aim of this long struggle was to give to every man free scope for his energies in a community of free men. It was a policy which was working towards a peaceful community of nations, each finding its own prosperity in the prosperity of its neighbours. Thus David Hume could write: 'I shall therefore venture to acknowledge that, not only as a man but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself.'

Now it seems that the nations have turned back from this road by which in past generations their liberties were won, and are now bent on putting their neck again under the yoke of authority. The State, instead of being the arbiter which by just laws holds the balance even between individuals and strives to maintain the utmost possible liberty for each, is now called upon to take into its own hands the management of everybody and every thing. And the hope is that under such State control the highest possible degree of wealth and well-being will be attained. Perhaps the chief underlying cause of this extraordinary *volte-face* is to be found in the decadence of the liberal spirit in the later nineteenth century, which with its doctrine of *laissez-faire* proved traitor to its own essential spirit and withdrew its hand from the plough while it had still a long furrow before it. It grew blind to the fact that it had still a mighty crusade before the liberty of every class and of every individual was achieved. So the mass of men, groaning under their disabilities, began to look elsewhere for their economic salvation.

But the way of collectivism leads to inevitable disillusionment. Mr. LIPPMANN makes a terrific



attack upon it in all its forms. It is impracticable. The job of managing the whole life of a nation is too big for any man or group of men. It is vain to hope that a bureaucracy of supermen will somehow arise. The governors, whoever they may be, are but mortal men who may be tired, careless, prejudiced, ambitious, unscrupulous. A moment's reflection on the infinite complexity of a nation's life shows that the work of overhead planning is beyond human capacity. It could be done only by a rigid discipline of labour and a standardizing of the products of labour.

Collectivism, also, instead of enriching tends to impoverish. It can function only inside an enclosed area, for out in the open market its Five Years' Plans would be upset. Hence it involves 'the whole apparatus of a politically administered economy, the fixed prices and fixed wages, the sumptuary laws, the forced labour, the communized consumption, the directed production, not to speak of the censored and managed opinion in the totalitarian states, which is a reversion to the political technic which had to be rejected in order that the industrial revolution could take place.' For this reason it is in reality a 'war economy.' It tends to cultivate an intensely nationalist spirit; it builds barriers between the nations which curtail the freedom of trade; its discipline leaves no room for the dissenter and the conscientious objector; it turns the nation into an army. The social order resulting from it is as different from the social order envisaged in the gospel as the awkward squad under the sergeant-major is different from the family circle in a Christian home.

This leads to the ultimate objection to collectivism—that it does not respect human personality. It demands that the individual shall become an instrument of the State, and it is workable only when it can enforce this subjection. But man is inviolable because his personality is an end in itself, because, in Christian language, man has an immortal soul. This truth, which is vital to Christianity and to all spiritual religion, is the charter of the rights of man and sets a final limit to human interference. For this reason the true collectivist

is hostile to religion, and hence we see the dictators attacking the Churches. 'They are well advised. They are not stupid men. They have appraised the religious life correctly when they have seen in it the source of the infection, or, as we should call it, the source of the inspiration, that makes men secure in their manhood, rejects the pretensions of their masters, invests the human personality with infinite dignity and untold promise. They have seen truly that the religious experience must for ever raise up new enemies of the totalitarian state. For in that experience the convictions which the dictators must crush are bred and continually renewed.'

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A little volume has been recently published on *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Epworth Press; 3s. 6d. net). It consists of four lectures by members of the staff of Wesley College, Headingley. The Biblical foundations of the doctrine, its history in the life and thought of the Church, and its theological implications are successively set forth in outline. Let us notice the contents of the second lecture, on 'The Spirit in the New Testament,' which is by the well-known Biblical scholar, Principal Vincent TAYLOR, D.D.

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A notable feature in the New Testament is its witness to the strong consciousness of the first Christian believers of being under the power and direction of the Spirit of God. It is not too much to say that the New Testament Church is the community of the Spirit. The Spirit enters into the most intimate relationships with believers, teaching, guiding, inspiring, constraining, and so on. There is scarcely an aspect of Christian belief and character which is not in some way or other associated with the Spirit's presence and power. It is especially to be noticed that the fruits of the Spirit are ethical. The Spirit is 'Holy,' and His power is directed to the sanctification and enrichment of life.

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As for the place of the doctrine of the Spirit in the message of Jesus, there is a very limited number of references to the Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels, not only on the part of Jesus but also on that

of the Evangelists. The explanation lies in the principle which the form-critics are emphasizing, namely, that the preservation of both narratives and sayings in the oral period A.D. 30-60 was determined by the dominating interests and problems of the primitive Christian communities. And among these the doctrine of the Spirit is not to be numbered. The belief in the Spirit was a commonplace of Apostolic Christianity.

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This is said on the assumption of the essential trustworthiness of the gospel tradition. But what if Bultmann and Branscomb are right in finding that the references to the Spirit in the message of Jesus are unauthentic, being products of the Christian community? How must we explain the rarity of the references then? The fact is that it is impossible on this critical theory to account for the rarity of the references, for it is impossible to say what prevented their wholesale introduction into the stream of the gospel tradition. Why, for example, does the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels not exhort His disciples to receive the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, to manifest the fruits of the Spirit?

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It looks as though the historian is justified in refusing to find an unbridgeable gap between the teaching of Jesus and the faith of the Early Church, and the theologian may build with confidence on the tradition of Jesus' reported sayings.

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In the Fourth Gospel the sayings of Jesus with reference to the Spirit are more numerous than those in the Synoptic Gospels. While it is impossible to claim that these sayings reproduce the exact words of Jesus, it is just as impossible to maintain that they are inventions of the Evangelist simply put into the lips of Jesus. Sometimes the Evangelist expresses original sayings of Jesus in another idiom, sometimes he expresses what he believes to be the mind of Christ. But we cannot identify the kind or class to which a specific saying belongs.

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The real question, however, is whether the Johannine sayings express the mind of Christ, and we may confidently say that they do. It may be

doubtful whether Jesus actually said that the Spirit comes from the Father, testifies of Christ, and leads men into the truth; but there is no doubt that such sayings give the teaching of Jesus as elucidated and expressed by a singularly discerning mind. The influence of the Christian community is to be found with far greater justice here than in the case of the Synoptic sayings.

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So closely connected is the doctrine of the Spirit with the revelation made in Jesus Christ that it is natural to speak of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of God without any intention of making exclusive distinctions. This is the foundation upon which Christian theology must ever build. And if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, as the Gospels and the Epistles represent Him to be, and as faith and experience interpret Him, then the way is prepared 'for that long process of Christian inquiry and debate which finds its least inadequate expression in the historic doctrine of the Trinity.'

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The Archbishop's 'Recall to Religion' has certainly caused in all the Churches a welcome stirring of the waters. It has at least made Christian men face the situation in all its seriousness and begin to seek earnestly for a remedy. And this of itself is good, and may be taken as a sign of the coming of better days.

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Among other things it has been, partly at least, responsible for the publication by Canon Peter GREEN of an admirable little book for laymen entitled *The Christian Man* (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. 6d. net). It may be taken as a companion volume to his Durham Lectures on 'The Man of God,' which were addressed to the clergy.

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Desperate situations call for desperate remedies, and the religious situation to-day may well be regarded as desperate. At any rate, it is not a situation which can be met by any activity of the clergy alone. 'Nothing can save western civilization from complete collapse except a great return to God. Now in such a revival of religion the



clergy must obviously play a great and important part. But it may well be doubted whether the part which the laity must play, if any results are to be attained, is not greater and more important.

It is not merely that the clergy alone cannot possibly overtake the work, nor merely that as long as the laity are unaffected the work has obviously failed. There is more in it than that. So long as the clergy regard the laity, with the possible exception of office-bearers and church workers, as simply supplying a field for their activity, the Church must necessarily fail. 'The laity are not primarily a field in which the clergy can labour. They supply, or should supply, a field from which can be drawn active workers for Christ. Indeed the parson has failed unless he has helped his men to be, in all their work and in every relation in life, "labourers together with God." This is true alike for the sake of the men themselves, and for the sake of the Kingdom of God which needs their work.'

Now there is no such thing as a dual standard of Christian life and morals. The Church of Rome has countenanced a deep distinction between the properly 'religious' life, so called, and the secular, demanding from the various orders of its clergy a degree of consecration which, owing to the weakness of human nature, could not be expected from the common man. This error finds a ready acceptance in many minds throughout all the Churches. But apart from the reasonable expectation that the Christian minister should be more obviously devoting himself to Christian work, there is no ground for the idea that the clergy are to live on a higher spiritual level than the laity. 'The layman who supposes that he is justified in trying to serve God on a lower level of spirituality, and with less entire self-surrender, than he himself would deem necessary in a priest, deceives himself grievously. Holiness is required of a lay Christian no less than of a priest, and the idea that a lower standard of holiness will do in the one than in the other finds no support in Holy Scripture.' Not to the Twelve only, but to all His disciples, Jesus said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' All Christians without distinc-

tion, whatever their worldly occupation or calling may be, are 'called to be saints.'

Misunderstanding must, of course, on this point be carefully guarded against. The word 'saint' has unfortunately lost its original meaning and fallen somewhat into contempt. But it simply means 'belonging to God,' or 'set apart for the service of God.' In this sense even inanimate things, like the vessels in the Temple, could be called holy. But, of course, in morally responsible beings set apart for the service of God there is required of necessity a certain moral character in accordance with the character of the God whom they serve.

What should be made clear is that this holiness or consecration to God is natural to man, that is to the true man that each of us ought to be, and every man's holiness should sit naturally upon him like a well-fitting garment. That holiness is natural to man in the deepest sense becomes evident when we reflect that man was created by God and is sustained by God for nothing less than this great end, that he should 'glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.' Holiness is to the soul what health is to the body. The Spirit of God is the life of the soul as the air we breathe is the life of the body. 'Holiness, healthiness of the spiritual side of man's being, means surrender to, and direction by, the Holy Spirit. That is what man was created for. And the man who is living apart from God, self-seeking and self-directed, is living an unnatural life, and is in what a doctor, if talking of the bodily state, would call a pathological or unhealthy condition. And that being so, holiness, true and real holiness, is possible for all; for boys and girls as much as for men and women, though of course the holiness of a lad or girl will be of a different kind, and show itself in different ways, from that of a man or woman in old age.'

The statement that holiness is natural to man needs to be qualified, or rather to be properly understood. Human nature has been so far perverted by sin that man is led by his evil desires to do many things which are really unnatural. There



are many to-day who loudly claim that they are entitled to follow the desires of their own sinful hearts without restraint, and that to enlarge in every possible way the circle of their experiences is to live the more abundant life. They need to learn that there are promptings of passion which, instead of enriching life, impoverish and may even ruin it; that there are experiences which, so far from adding to the fullness of life, subtract from it, and may end by putting the final balance on the wrong side. We must therefore say to young people, in answer to their claim for full self-development and self-expression, 'You are right, absolutely right, to desire to develop all your powers and potentialities; to make the most of yourself. But the way to do so is not to throw the reins on the neck of your lower nature, but to set before you the ideal of true holiness. If we are right in believing that man is made to be in-dwelt and directed by God, then a life lived apart from God must always be a failure.'

Now there is a point at which all this must take its rise, and it is a point which must on no account be overlooked or passed in silence. 'Before anything can be perfected it must be begun, and the first step in holiness is that surrender to God, and acceptance of His Holy Spirit as Ruler and Guide, which we call conversion.' It may come in a single moment of strong decision, or it may be the fruit of a long process, a daily resistance of evil and choice of good. 'But whether as an instantaneous experience or as the result of innumerable acts of choice, one thing there must be, and that is a voluntary, distinct, and conscious acceptance of Christ as unquestioned Master, Saviour, and God. The weakness of the Church is that so many of her members have never made that choice at all.'

It is not possible here to indicate the wealth of wise Christian counsel which Canon GREEN gives to the layman for the culture of his spiritual life,

the conduct of his business life, with all its special temptations and difficulties, and for his public service to the Kingdom of God. He calls for men who, in every walk of life, will be true to their colours and staunch to their Christian principles. 'When religion is discussed in the columns of the daily press we are often assured that there is a great deal more religion than the clergy think; that men are more religious at heart than they are willing to admit; and that men who make no profession of religion are often truer followers of Jesus Christ than the active members of church and chapel. If this is really true—and personally I think ninety per cent. of it is shocking nonsense—it would seem to be a very deplorable thing. I can forgive a man who is utterly indifferent to religion for doing nothing in God's service. I find no excuse for a man who is, or at least claims to be, truly religious and an earnest follower of Jesus Christ, who is too lazy or too timid to stick to his colours.'

Amid the cares of his business and the multitudinous activities of his daily life the layman must not forget the culture of his own soul. This is due to no spiritual selfishness, but to the obvious fact that no man can do good while he is not trying to *be* good. 'It is difficult to say whether the slogan, popular before the War with a certain school of writers, which ran, "Don't bother about saving your own dirty soul. Try and do some good in the world," was more silly than wicked, or more wicked than silly. Certainly it was supremely both of these things. It was like saying to a surgeon, "Don't bother about cleansing your own dirty hands. Get on with the operation." The only result would be that the patient would die of septic poisoning.' There is nothing better a man can do for his neighbour, his country, and the world than to seek holiness, for holiness is very infectious, and the people who do most good are the people to whom God is most real.



## Christianity in Action.

### The Church and the Social Services.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND A. A. DAVID, D.D., BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL.

THERE was a time when the statesman was responsible for keeping order and dispensing justice within his country, and for defending it from its enemies. Citizens paid their Government to do that for them, and not much more. But in modern times the State is no longer content to confine itself to the functions of the policeman, the lawyer, and the soldier. In all countries it has gradually enlarged its sphere of action. It has taken one department of human welfare after another into its controlling care. In some countries it claims now to embrace the whole of life. In Germany and Italy and Russia there is hardly anything a citizen can do for himself except with the permission or by the order of some official of the State. In Great Britain we shall never accept this totalitarian theory of government, however attractive its immediate achievements may be, because the love of liberty is in our blood. 'Britons never will be slaves,' even to their own freely elected Government. Nevertheless, we have to recognize that even Britons are in many respects not quite so free as they were. We have submitted to interference by the State in matters which the politician of the past would never have dared to touch at all.

What have we lost by this public invasion into what used to be regarded as private concerns? There are some who declare that it has not only threatened our essential liberty, but has also weakened our sense of responsibility. A man says, 'If the State will educate my children, will help me to feed them, will look after me when I am ill, will keep me going somehow if I lose my job, will give me a pension when I am sixty-five, then I have by so much the less need to provide these things for myself and for my family. I need not "look forward." And if he can say that, his independence of character, his whole moral fibre, is in danger of being weakened. But there need be little apprehension in this regard. After all, however much is done for people, there will always remain incentive enough for them to do more for themselves. And the provision now made for the poorer citizen enables him to provide further for himself. Moreover, we have to recognize that all these changes are themselves due to a new sense of

responsibility, not for ourselves, but for our neighbours. When we of this generation pay our taxes and our rates, we know that we are enabling the country, or the city, to do for the needy what could never have been done for them anywhere in any previous century. And what does this mean? In the simple language of the gospel it means that the love of our neighbour has made its way into the law of the land. If ever we are asked what Christianity has done for the world, may we not for one of our answers point to the achievement of the social services? In them we have seen God at work.

Here, then, is a change in our national life which has come upon us by almost universal agreement, and, as it were, so inevitably that we are apt to overlook all that it involves for the Churches and their work. It is well, therefore, that we should face this new situation squarely, and consider how we can best adjust ourselves to it, and what new opportunities it offers us. At first sight the increased and increasing claims of the State upon social, and therefore upon individual life, seems to imply a shrinkage of the field of activity hitherto open to the Church. In the old days, when the relief of all kinds of distress was almost entirely the concern of private benevolence, how was it effected? Individuals discerned here and there a need of one kind and another which they felt impelled to meet. So they formed themselves into voluntary societies and set to work to do what they could. May we not claim that they acted under the inspiration, direct or indirect, of the Church? In those days it was the Church that took the initiative in teaching the children, in building schools, in founding hospitals, and innumerable other institutions designed to alleviate poverty, ignorance, and distress. Again, it was the Church that sent its agents into our Police Courts, bringing with them Christian help and guidance to offenders against the law. Out of that work has grown the whole of our great probationary system, and it is much to be desired that the Church should still take a share in this work by providing voluntary helpers in the after-care of young delinquents.

It would be easy to quote other examples in



which groups of individuals have done their best on a very small scale to make the lives of the poor a little less hard and a little more secure. And they have done it so well that the State has followed their examples upon an immensely larger scale, and in many respects with far greater efficiency. Does this mean that the Church is being squeezed out of the sphere of practical benevolence? May it now relegate these good works to a Government which has taken so definite a responsibility for them, and confine itself wholly to what is after all its primary task of drawing men into its own body, and there preparing character for service? Such a prospect need not be considered. For, in the first place, there will always be room for new enterprises and adventures of Christian love, and for these the initiative must still come from the Christian Church. Christ's followers must ever be asking themselves what *more* He would have us wisely do for His poor. The Church must continue its work of stimulating and inspiring State benevolence, and of pointing the way to fuller and more far-seeing applications of love for our neighbours. But, in the second place, there are new and rich opportunities opening before us out of social legislation as it exists to-day. They are waiting for our foresight to discern and our courage to use them.

The first great extension in England of State concern in the social life of the people was in the sphere of education. In 1870 the Government took over responsibility for the instruction and, to some limited extent, for the training of the children. It began to build schools and to maintain them out of public funds. And that public service has been developed ever since, till now a large and increasing number of elementary and secondary schools are provided and maintained by the State, and very considerable assistance is given in grants to schools and universities by local authorities and by the Government. This at once suggests the question whether in these new conditions it is wise to continue a policy designed to meet the old ones. I have myself no doubt that it is not wise. Up till 1870 the Church of England was right to build and administer schools. There was no one else to do it. The Church did so with such success that the State was impelled by our example to assume this responsibility as a public duty. How shall we take our proper share in that public responsibility? First, as I think, by maintaining the schools we own, as examples, still needed, of what elementary schools should be and do, and making these in all respects as well provided and equipped as Council schools.

But it is not part of our proper share to compete with the State any further by the provision of new schools. We desire to be partners with central and local authorities, and not their rivals; and we ought to leave to them that part of the work which they can do far better than we can. What then remains for us in the sphere of education as it surrounds us to-day? I hold that there is a great range of opportunity which we ought resolutely to explore in the wider setting I have tried to describe. In the educational field I have only time to indicate one of our chances, to my mind the most important of them all, namely, the care of those who teach in Church or Council schools. Let us press on their behalf for a longer period of training. Two years in a Training College is not enough. In our own colleges let us secure that this training shall offer them the best and wisest religious influence we can provide. Let us be bolder in suggesting to them that the vocation of a Christian teacher calls for a real and complete dedication of mind and spirit. In the State Training Colleges and the University departments, and also in our secondary schools, let us see that opportunities shall be offered to students at least to prepare themselves to teach the Bible. There we can count upon the willing, I would say even the eager, co-operation of the Free Churches. I believe also that State authorities, both central and local, are more than ready to accept our suggestions and even to help us in this matter, provided that our approach to them is based upon our common Christianity and can be kept free from any suspicion of sectarian claims. Again, we have as a Church a duty to the teacher in his school. He needs our help, and he wants it, as is nearly always shown by the response to our offer of lectures, refresher courses, and discussion groups, by which he may enrich his own spiritual life, and exercise a stronger Christian influence in his work. He ought, moreover, to be protected against the poison of secularist literature. There are books which fall into his hands subtly designed to undermine his faith. They can easily be answered. Ought not the Church to be watchful and alert in counteracting this kind of false and subversive propaganda? There are many other means open to us of securing that teachers shall have at least their full chance of becoming, in knowledge and in life, what they must be if they are to train our children to be members of a Christian country and a Christian Church. And, after all, it is not through buildings or systems but through persons that they will so be prepared. I have written of Church and State as partners in educational



service from an English point of view. In Scotland this co-operation has become happier and more settled than ours, and many of us wish that we could attain a similar partnership south of the Border on similar lines. For various reasons, some of them historical, this seems at present out of our reach. In this country we have problems of religious education to solve which are special to ourselves. But we shall approach them with a larger wisdom and with new hope in the wider setting I am attempting to describe.

From the State's concern in teaching I return to its work in alleviating economic distress and insecurity. Since 1906 social legislation of this kind has come upon us with a rush. We have had Acts of Parliament dealing with insurance against sickness and unemployment, with the provision of houses, with relief of distress, with medical treatment, with the maintenance of health, with pensions. And now we are to receive State aid in providing our leisure hours with wholesome recreation through clubs and community centres. For these purposes vast administrative systems have been set up and very complicated machinery has been devised. This is entirely necessary where the State has to provide for great multitudes and varieties of people. And it is inevitable that these operations should in the main be wholesale, mechanistic, impersonal. I am not one of those who are quick to complain of the evils of bureaucracy and officialdom. I know too well that they exist. But when we consider fairly the difficulties that confront our Civil Servants, we ought, I think, to be thankful that in this country, and both in London and in our municipalities, they are in their work as human and sympathetic as we know them to be. Nevertheless, if this State benevolence is to be conveyed to the individual in a Christian spirit, there is need of something more than the administration of a law. And that has been recognized. In nearly every Social Service Act there is provision for a voluntary advisory body. The State relies upon the assistance, the counsel, the experience of individual social workers. It gives a share in public administration to the subtle and invaluable influence of personal service, and, so far as I can ascertain, ours is the only country in which this policy has been deliberately adopted.

Here, then, is a clear call to the Church which we dare not neglect. 'I am among you,' said our Lord, 'as he that serveth.' Now that the State is itself a servant of the Royal Law, ought we not to be producing men and women prepared to share with it that service? As members of the Church

which is His Body they should be growing into just that type of personality—observant, keen, unselfish, humble—which He needs for work both within it and outside. May not the State rightly expect that the Church, nurturing such personalities, should send them out for service in the world? We have seen how Christian principles have won their way into secular spheres. To that extent the gospel has already permeated public life. Ought not the Church to follow up that achievement by a stronger leavening still? Let the clergy make it a part of their teaching to encourage and inspire laymen to grasp this opportunity of Christian service whenever it comes within their reach as members of district and borough councils, of advisory committees, of community councils, or of one or other of those voluntary social service organizations which are handmaids of the State and partners in State enterprises. Most of them have a gift for some constructive work if not for leadership, though in many it is latent, waiting for its chance. If they are conscious of any such capacity, let them seek their opportunities first in the parish. But let them not be content with Christian service that is spent wholly within the family life of the Church, and never goes beyond it. Their opportunities outside are multiplying year by year.

Within the last few months a new set of chances have emerged into special importance. They arise out of the latest venture of the Ministries of Health and Education. It is much more than an encouragement of Physical Training. To establish its full purpose there will be need of the co-operation of a large number of existing clubs and other voluntary associations and of some new ones. Community Centres are springing up not in new districts only but everywhere, to be homes of all manner of healthful activities and of fellowship life. These new institutions will of course offer membership to individuals, or, as at the Peckham Health Centre, to families. But they will serve a still higher purpose if they also provide a common shelter for clubs or other social units, each preserving its distinctive character and bringing its own separate contribution into the life of the whole. Thus might a Centre become a *communitas communitatum*. But as such it will be incomplete if local Church 'communities' remain outside. What prospect is there that they will throw their influence into this development? Here we have to reckon with a serious obstacle to co-operation between social agencies of the Church and those others that stand outside all religious adherence. They regard each other with mutual suspicion. The former,



using culture and recreation as means to spiritual ends, are naturally apprehensive of activities which seem to concentrate on the welfare of the body and the mind with no regard for the health of the spirit. Their concern is with the whole personality, and they feel at a disadvantage when they have to meet competing attractions offered by others who care for only a part of it. This helps to explain the reserved and negative attitude once very common among churchmen towards any welfare movement to which the word 'secular' can be applied. Thus, when Women's Institutes began to be established in English villages, many of the clergy stood aloof from them as irrelevant, and even potentially hostile, to religion. The 'secular' organizations on their part are equally suspicious of the Church. They resent the inference that because they are 'undenominational' therefore they are against religion, or even that they take no account of it. Many of them would declare that they must wear that label, not because they are careless of spiritual interests, but because they are afraid of sectarian discord, and because, working for members of all Churches, they cannot afford to be dominated by any one of them.

Recently, however, hopeful signs have appeared from both directions. Among Church people there is a growing recognition that a true line of Christian advance lies in the permeation of all social effort by the spiritual influence which it is the peculiar function of the Churches to exert both within their borders and outside. It is not denied that this influence must begin its work in self-contained and homogeneous groups looking to the Church for religious teaching and worship, and also for opportunities of social intercourse in which learners and worshippers may become friends. Otherwise the Church cannot build up a secure and continuous family life of its own. But it is realized that such exclusive groups may safely seek at least some of their social activities in a more comprehensive sphere, where they may be trusted to bring a spiritual influence of their own. Suppose, for instance, a Church club for young men, housed as one of many others in a Community Centre, and taking its share of advantages offered in common to all. No doubt its members might

be tempted to lower standards, a risk to which they must in any case be constantly exposed. But if they are well grounded and well led, might not this club help to raise the spiritual level of the community life surrounding it? This is one of the considerations which is likely to ensure a warmer welcome from the Church for movements in which the State is helping the people to build up a richer cultural and spiritual life for themselves.

We must also take account of another encouraging sign of the times. There is to-day a widespread revival of interest among lay-folk in a spiritual or Christian approach to life. In 'secular' clubs and other organizations, as also in factories, a hearing is readily given to any one who will deal with this approach, provided that he speaks in the name, not of one of the separated Churches, but of Christ Himself. This new interest is reflected among those who are centrally responsible for the administration of the Physical Training Act. There is ample evidence of their desire that the whole movement shall not only secure the support of the Churches, but also be itself pervaded by the religious spirit and directed towards spiritual as well as bodily health. It is even likely that grants of money will be made to Church organizations which can show that they are managed with reasonable efficiency. And a far-sighted leader of this public enterprise, not himself a Churchman, goes so far as to say, 'If I did not believe that this movement is essentially religious, I could take no interest and I should see no hope in it.'

We have reviewed a new set of opportunities open to the Church. How can we grasp them by meeting the State in its tentative approaches? Only by enlisting the voluntary service of lay-men and women of all ages, who have been taught that the love they owe to God may be paid to their neighbours, and are prepared to learn by further study and training how this may be done. Upon them it depends whether the Church is to rest content with methods of Christian work appropriate enough to the social conditions of the last century, but inadequate to the environment of to-day; or is to grow into its new responsibilities, and by so doing to extend and strengthen its influence upon the national life.

# Old Texts in Modern Translations.

## Jeremiah xlv. 4, 5 (McFadyen).

BY PRINCIPAL H. WHEELER ROBINSON, D.D., OXFORD.

'WHEN I must destroy what I built, and when I must uproot what I planted, shalt *thou* seek great things for thyself?' That is a question which life puts to all of us, sooner or later. But there are two other questions which usually lead up to it. The first is, 'What do you want?'—the question which challenges us as we stand on the threshold of responsible life. We choose a career, or drift into one. We enter on a friendship which may shape all our life. We begin to create the world of personal interests in which our chief recreation will be found. It seems as if a really adequate answer would require the knowledge drawn from a full experience of life. How can we tell what anything really is until we have tried it? We stand like travellers at the parting of many untried ways, where to choose one is to reject the others, and to which there can be no retracing of our steps. Really to know what we want of life is no mean portion of life's wisdom. It was a pardonable exaggeration of Carlyle's to say, 'Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessing.'

Close on the heels of that first question, 'What do you want?' comes the second, 'What will you pay for it?' Again, it seems an unfair question. How can any of us foresee just how much effort in muscle or brain it will cost him to reach the chosen goal of his journey? Nobody knows what any particular experience will cost him until he has gone through it. We must go on paying for what we wanted, farthing by farthing, day by day. Each man learns the cost to himself—rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker. If any one of them cries, 'I don't want to be this, I want to be something else,' life is ready with the question in a new form, and retorts, 'Then what *do* you want to be, and how much will you pay to change over?' Most things are possible—even to be a saint—if we want them enough, and are ready to pay the inevitable price for them.

The third question is really that of the text: 'What do you want it *for*?' It usually lags behind the others, and is sometimes sprung upon a man in his middle-age, when he has largely attained his ambition, made his reputation, gathered his money. 'What will you do with it, now that you have got

it? What was the secret motive all the time inspiring your energies, which now has the opportunity to display itself?' This is the most difficult of the three questions to answer, because it deals with the subtle pressures, the half-conscious instincts, the dim desires, which we have never dragged into the light for self-judgment. How hard it is to be sure that we have ever done anything with entire unselfishness! How easily a man may go on persuading himself that he is inspired by high and honourable motives, by the desire to serve others, to make a genuine contribution to the world's welfare, to advance knowledge, to obey God—until he reaches a point at which the subtle tinge of selfishness, the corruption of a mean, cowardly, tyrannical or sensual spirit is revealed to others or even to himself! That revelation may come through success, when a man no longer needs to pretend. But it may also come through failure, disillusionment, the embitterment of spirit that at last knows itself for what it is.

The question of the text was addressed to Baruch, the secretary of Jeremiah. He had answered the first two questions successfully. He had encountered one of the world's really great men, the finest of the Old Testament prophets, the large-hearted, tender-souled Jeremiah. Baruch's own heart had gone out in passionate discipleship to him, for here surely was a man to love, and a man to follow. When Baruch met Jeremiah, he knew what he wanted. Not less was he ready for the second question, ready to pay the price of such discipleship in isolation, hatred, peril of life. He does not seem ever to have flinched whilst Jeremiah and he stood alone against a whole people. It was worth while to be the friend and companion of such a man as the prophet, and to feel sure of being on the side of God. But now came the third question, the acid test of the alloy of selfishness. It came through apparent failure. To see no result for all your work, to believe that it will all be thrown away—how hard it is to go on working still, for the work's sake! For Baruch, the sorrow of this personal grief was mingled with sympathy with his country's fate: 'Woe is me now: for Jehovah hath added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest.'



To such a man comes the divine message, through the prophet's lips. The point of it lies in the contrast between the unshrinking spirit of God and the shrinking spirit of Baruch, yet beneath the contrast there is God's greatest gift, an offered fellowship. 'When I must destroy what I built, and when I must uproot what I planted, shalt *thou* seek great things for thyself?' It is the emphasis of the new translation which brings out this point. God has lavished His care on a people whose national existence He is now compelled to destroy. God is about to overthrow the very building His own hands have built through many centuries. God will uproot the very trees His own hands once planted. In Christian terms, the prophet's message gives a glimpse of the Cross of Christ in the heart of God, the eternal passion of self-sacrifice that is God's very nature, 'the authentic sign and seal of Godship.' To this sorrowful human heart, God Himself says, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like mine . . . can you not forget your own demands, your little self, as I show you my heart of sorrow?' That is the greatest of all comfort, for it is the lifting up of a man's thought and vision to something far greater than himself, to a purpose of far-reaching horizon, to an interpretation of the universe in which his private trouble falls into its true place and finds its true comfort. The realization that there is self-sacrifice at the very heart of God gives strength, motive, vision, and, above all, the companionship of Spirit with spirit, in what would else have been a lonely world.

The spirit of the Cross is a *spirit*, and not a formula. 'To become stereotyped,' it has been said, 'is to fail in life.' The social tradition, which hands on to each of us the acquisitions and achievements of the past, easily becomes a tyranny to which we are slaves. So it is that, to the eyes of youth, middle-age often seems to be built on a foundation of prudential compromises and tame expediences—and youth is not always wrong. To live by a spirit is much more difficult and sometimes more dangerous than to conform our lives to a set of maxims, a code of rules. But this tame surrender to circumstance and to public opinion is again and again challenged by the essential Christian emphasis on the spirit of the Cross. The Christian is always in need of the Apostolic warning that life cannot be reduced to a set of petty rules—'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' On the other hand, the spirit of self-denial ranges from the mere courtesies of everyday intercourse up to the great heroisms. Think of Jesus in the Pharisee's

house, watching with half-humorous pity the unseemly jostling for the best seats. His little parable of good manners—'when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place'—is not simply a contribution to a Palestinian book of social 'Don'ts'; it is the application of the spirit of the Cross to the little things of life. There is no finality in such a spirit. We do not exhaust its meaning in some choice of a vocation once for all, like that of the monk or the missionary. Those who make a worthy choice at the outset find that the ideal of it continually expands, and makes ever new demands upon them. There is a fine, though simple enough, example of this in the Labrador experience of Wilfred Grenfell. He tells us how his work as a medical missionary had brought him to a home where the mother lay dead and the father dying. Next day, he had to improvise a double funeral, and then found himself, as he says, with five little mortals sitting on the grave-mound. 'We thought we had done all that could be expected of a doctor, but we now found the difference. *It looked as if God expected more.*' So Grenfell had to establish his Children's Home. That is the essential quality of the spirit of the Cross. God expects more, and both the glory and the rebuke of the Christian ideal spring from that divine expectation. To face that continued demand is one of the most real difficulties of the Christian conscience. Where am I to draw the line between legitimate personal comfort, honourable ambition, a respectable standard of Christian living, on the one side, and on the other, the sternly haunting word, 'Seekest *thou* great things for thyself?' If I do draw such a line, God's finger wipes it out.

The spirit of the Cross, then, is the characteristic spirit of Christianity. Just because it is not a formula or a code of rules but a distinctive attitude to life, it gives to the religion of the Cross its unique character. There is no other religion like this so free from the spirit of a bargain, at least wherever the characteristic spirit of the New Testament religion is maintained. God comes to man in the Cross of Jesus Christ, not in the first place demanding obedience, but offering Himself to us as the self-sacrificing God. There is no other religion which does not insist on certain acts of obedience, ritual or moral, before man can approach God and be sure of welcome. But the spirit of the Cross, so amply illustrated in the words and works of Jesus, means that God does not wait for man to qualify himself for approach to God. God takes the initiative and approaches man. God wins man to a voluntary and far more complete obedience by the

graciousness and grace of His own previous approach to man.

This is the genuine spirit of the Church of Christ. Underneath all the differences of the successive generations and nationalities, all the peculiarities of organization and utterance and even conduct, we could find no more universal and characteristic feature of the genuine tradition of our faith than that of the spirit of the Cross. Whether we think of the message or of the method, of the religion or of the morality, it is this note of self-sacrifice, divine and human, this acceptance of suffering for the sake of the divine purpose, which makes the true Church one. The supreme sacrament of the Church is the sacrament of apparent failure, for in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we proclaim, we 'preach,' the Cross of Christ, the Cross which was failure before it could be success. The history of the Church may often show the lamentable absence even of the ideal, but also shows its continual re-emergence and frequent realization. The spirit of the Cross is not confined to the visible Church, and some of its finest examples lie beyond the borders of any organization. Yet it is the Church which best nurtures that spirit in ordinary men and women. It is the Church as the fellowship of that spirit which preserves and hands on the great tradition of it, and in this sign alone can conquer. The fellowship of the Church is built on what has truly been called that right of the weaker over the stronger which is part of the moral structure of the universe. It is built on the principle enunciated by a notable French writer, 'Nothing is lost when we make an offering of it.'

Such a fellowship of men, by its very nature, proclaims that fellowship with God on which it depends for very existence. All human sympathy, all social consciousness, all generous service, spring from a human nature which God has created in His own image. They belong to man as truly as the self-seeking instincts, with which they are so often in conflict. But, because of this conflict, they need the constant reinforcement of the fellowship of God, in whom there is no such conflict, since it is of His very self to give Himself. Morality always needs, indeed always implies, some sort of religion. Life is ultimately a lonely business, and loneliest

as it moves upwards. But that upward path, at every step, brings a clearer vision of Him who so loved that He gave, Him for whom living is giving. Morality at its highest, in the spirit of the Cross, must always mean, like mysticism, an 'alone with the Alone.'

This is not the place to argue in what sense God can be said to suffer. It is enough to say that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christ we see on the Cross, is One who carries the whole burden of the universe, One who does not stand aloof from it but enters into it, One who is not Himself unmoved by the cry of the whole creation groaning and travelling in pain until now. In some deep sense it must be true that the Cross of Christ is the age-long Cross of God Himself, whilst sinning and suffering man works out his troubled course and attains his destiny. It must be true, for there is no solution to the problem of human suffering, save in the divine. This is the clear teaching of the Bible, in the Old Testament as well as in the New. We have been listening to a prophet comforting his disciple by the thought of a fellowship with God in suffering. This is the essence of the gospel. God's love shrinks from no sacrifice that it may save to the uttermost. The spirit of that divine sacrifice can animate every honourable career, and consecrate every worthy ambition, but it is also the secret of that inner peace for which every human heart seeks, the peace which Jesus offered on His Cross. I shall always remember one night in an Austrian village. I had been tramping all day with a very intimate friend, but before we went to bed we walked out of the village late at night and stood on the little bridge over its stream. The village was asleep; all around us, in the moonlight, were the everlasting hills, crowned with their snows. In that majestic stillness we seemed to have come as close to peace as any mortal could, and one of us said so. Then we happened to glance at the structure of the bridge. There, just above our heads, clear in the moonlight, though unnoticed before, was a crucifix. The face of the Sufferer, looking down upon us, seemed to say, 'O foolish men, to think that solitude is peace. This is my peace, the peace I won on the Cross, and give you from my Cross.'



## Literature.

### PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

THE translation of the massive work of Johannes Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, is a great achievement for which all New Testament scholars will be deeply grateful to the publishers, and to Dr. F. C. Grant and his three colleagues at the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. The translation is published in two handsome volumes under the title, *The History of Primitive Christianity* (Macmillan; 42s. net). Considerable as it is, this work is only the first half of what was to be the *magnum opus* of Johannes Weiss. The second part, alas! 'Jesus and Early Christianity,' was never written, for in August, 1914, death cut short the author's brilliant career in his fifty-first year. Book I. of *The History of Primitive Christianity*, which treats the theme of 'The Primitive Community,' is translated by the editor. Book II., 'The Gentile Mission and Paul the Missionary,' is translated by Dr. A. H. Forster; Book III., 'Paul the Christian and Theologian,' by Dr. P. S. Kramer; and Books IV. and V., 'The Missionary Congregations and the Beginnings of the Church,' and 'The Separate Areas,' by Dr. S. E. Johnson. The last three chapters of Book V., which trace the expansion of early Christianity in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia, and Rome, it should be recalled, were not written by Weiss himself, but were supplied after his death by his friend, the late Professor Rudolf Knopf, of Bonn.

It will be seen from this summary description how large a canvas Weiss had prepared for his masterpiece. There is indeed no other word by which to describe it. Although the work, as it exists, is unfinished, enough remains to show how great an undertaking it was, and it is evident that his earlier works, and, in particular, 'The Earliest Gospel' (1903), 'The Revelation of St. John' (1904), 'The Writings of the New Testament' (1905), and, above all, his fine 'Commentary' on 1 Corinthians (in Meyer's series, 1910), prepared the way for it.

Much the greater part of *The History of Primitive Christianity* is a detailed study of the work and writings of St. Paul, and it is in this masterly treatment that perhaps the chief value of the book lies. Paul, as Weiss sees him, is a vital personality, with a rich and living experience of Christ. Full justice is done to the Apostle's creative work, but Weiss has a much truer conception of the earliest

Christianity than to present him as one who transformed the new faith, by the aid of contemporary Hellenistic conceptions, and so made it something which it had never been before. By the aid of a careful analysis of the Acts and of the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, he shows that many elements which are often included under the term 'Paulinism' were, in reality, part of the common tradition of the first communities. In this connexion his treatment of the Messiahship of Jesus, the Resurrection, the use of the title 'Lord,' and Churches of Jerusalem and of Antioch, are of the greatest interest and importance. The use Weiss makes of the sayings of Jesus reveals the extent to which he was a precursor of Form-Criticism, and it is interesting to speculate how he would have estimated its more sceptical developments. Such a passage as the following is suggestive, and it has the advantage of revealing the clarity and forcefulness of his style. 'Every narrative that has been preserved, every saying that has survived, is evidence of some particular interest on the part of this primitive church. To this extent the selection of what was handed down serves to characterize the group whose interest it satisfied. The surviving tradition thus reflects, as in a mirror, the standards this earlier church set itself, the hopes it entertained, the conceptions it held of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, of Jesus as Messiah and Son of Man, of the future of Israel, and of the events which were to precede the end of the age. . . . In far greater measure must we learn to read the Gospels not only for what they tell us about Jesus, but also for what we can learn from them about the life and the faith of the earliest Christians' (i. 12 f.).

In addition to the abundant information which it contains, the entire work abounds in fruitful and stimulating suggestions. Again and again, the reader is provoked to ponder. For example, it is open to serious question whether the 'vision-theory' which Weiss sets forth is sufficient to account for the Resurrection faith, and whether he has provided an adequate foundation for the story of Christianity when he bids us steadily take into account 'the continuing influence of the personality of Jesus, so strong, and so sure of Himself.' It is in points such as these that one wonders how Weiss would have written, if he had been able to attack his projected work on Jesus and primitive Christianity.

A very practical question ought to be mentioned. Is the ordinary reader justified in purchasing so expensive a work? The answer is simple. If he means merely to skim these eight hundred and seventy pages, No; but if he desires to spend profitable weeks in a patient study of this great work, he will not regret the outlay of two guineas.

### THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS.

Somehow a certain romantic interest attaches to the group of religious thinkers who flourished at Cambridge in and after the middle of the seventeenth century, known to history as the Cambridge Platonists. Dean Inge among recent writers has done much to foster the interest in them, expounding their thought in the context of Christian mysticism. But there is room enough for further discussions and expositions of their thought, and for that reason we welcome the recent volume by Professor W. C. de Pauley, D.D., of the University of Toronto, entitled *The Candle of the Lord* (S.P.C.K.; 7s. 6d. net). This is the twenty-eighth volume of the series published by the S.P.C.K. for the Church Historical Society.

The most famous names among the Cambridge Platonists are Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, and Henry More. If the first-named was the originator of the School or Movement, the others appear to have engaged in a deeper philosophical effort, vindicating as against materialism or naturalism the spiritual nature of reality. In these studies all four thinkers are considered. In addition there are studies of Richard Cumberland, who has been described as rather 'a Cambridge Zenonian or Ciceronian' than a Cambridge Platonist; Nathaniel Culverwel, who has been described as rather 'a Christian Aristotelian' than a Christian Platonist; George Rust, a disciple of Henry More; and Edward Stillingfleet, who is not usually included in the group, but who 'takes us back to the candle of the Lord as it was lighted first in Adam.'

For comparison and contrast there are also elaborate references in this volume to the thought of Jeremy Taylor and John Calvin.

It is not a volume to be consulted in a hurry. Dr. de Pauley does not condescend to any introductory remarks on the place of the Cambridge Platonists in the religious thought of the seventeenth century in England. Nor does he preface his expositions with notes on the individual thinker of whose views he is about to treat. He plunges *in medias res*. The result is a volume not so much

for the beginner as for the more advanced reader, who is already familiar with the background and general content of the teaching of the Cambridge Platonists. Such a reader will value in particular the careful documentation of this learned and scholarly work.

### THE WAILING WALL.

*The Wailing Wall*, by Miss Olga Levvertoff (Mowbray; 3s. 6d.), is a brave and a beautiful book. Miss Levvertoff is a Christian who has not ceased to be a Jewess; she feels, indeed, that she is the more truly Jewish for being Christian. She cannot define Judaism, all the familiar tests of nationality fail; to her it is something fundamental and baffling analysis, and certainly it is quite consistent with earnest Christian faith and deep Christian experience. Her very language breathes the rich fragrance of the Eastern soul, and her style (not always, by the way, easy to read without close concentration) might almost be called in places Deuteronomic English.

Like Wasserman, whom she frequently quotes in her earlier chapters, Miss Levvertoff feels intensely the tragedy of her people's history, revived afresh by the persecutions of recent years. As she sees it, the supreme crisis was the great rejection of the Messiah. In Jesus, Jewry might have found and may—nay will—yet find the consummation of its own spiritual development. But her attitude is not one of judicial condemnation, it is that profound sympathy which identifies itself with the sorrow and the sin of a deeply loved people. Were Hosea alive to-day, we feel, he would speak in tones like these. We are impelled to the conviction that Israel has indeed 'received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' Yet her return to her true inheritance is possible only through the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, the crown and hope of Jewish nationality. There is a suggestion of *Holy Cross Day* about the book, but it is tender where Browning's Rabbi is pardonably bitter. Like her distinguished father, Miss Levvertoff could echo the words of that other Paul of old, and take as her motto the opening words of Romans 9 and 10.

But how is the ideal to be achieved? How is this nation, with its strong sense of superiority, and its rankling sense of the contempt with which the Gentile-Christian worlds regard it, to be brought to the foot of the Cross? Not by absorption in a materialistic world which may unify Jew and Gentile on a common basis of irreligion, nor by a Zionism which but seeks to add another to the kingdoms of



the world, can the goal be won. Nor is it even by the proclamation of Christian truth; 'missions' are in their place among races which have no contact with Christianity, but the Jew lives among the followers of Jesus, and will form his judgment acutely on their practical standard of life, not on their theology or even on the saintliness of the few. Least of all can the task be accomplished by persecution, by dragging the children of the Ghetto 'by the head and hair, and against their obstinate hearts, to partake of the heavenly grace.' In the last resort the only method is the permeation of the social order, in which the Jew now lives as an alien, with the spirit of Jesus the Jew. In the meantime something may be done by making it clear that even in its forms of worship the Church has room for the Jewish spirit, and not the least moving chapter in Miss Levertoff's work is the last, where she gives an account of the Jewish-Christian Eucharist as celebrated by men like her father. A brave and a beautiful book.

#### THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE.

The second volume of *The Epistle to the Romans* in *The Speaker's Bible*, edited by the Reverend Edward Hastings, M.A., has just been issued. The volume begins with a sermon on Ro 12<sup>1</sup> and continues to the end of the Epistle. There are some arresting topic studies also—Dr. A. Herbert Gray writing on 'Thank-Offerings to God,' Dr. J. H. Morrison on 'Christian Conscience and the Civil Government,' the Rev. J. S. Stewart on 'The Triumphant Adequacy of Jesus,' the Rev. R. Bethune on 'The Possessive Attitude,' and Dr. F. J. Rae on 'Tertius, Paul's Secretary.'

A point which strikes one specially in this volume is the very wide range of illustrative matter.

The volume includes also an excellent subject index to volumes xix.-xxviii. With the two previous indexes, which appeared in volumes ix. and xviii., this now forms a complete index to all the volumes which have been published up to date. No pains have been spared in this index to make all the material easily accessible, so that any one wishing to write on any particular aspect of a subject will be able with ease to read it up here.

Probably any one who has not already got the first volume on the Epistle to the Romans will wish to have it also. There we have the valuable Introduction written by Principal Vincent Taylor, where he discusses the Contents of the Epistle, the Purpose, the Date, the Genuineness, the Readers,

the Unity, and the Leading Ideas of the Epistle, as well as the Destination of chapter 16<sup>1-23</sup>.

While *The Speaker's Bible* is primarily intended to be a stimulus to the working minister it is also much used for devotional reading.

*Romans*, Volume II., may be obtained from all booksellers or direct from the publishers, The Speaker's Bible Office, Aberdeen, at the price of 9s. 6d. net. The publishers will be glad to send a prospectus of the earlier volumes and to supply these.

#### ONE OF BECKET'S BISHOPS.

*Bartholomew of Exeter: Bishop and Canonist* (Cambridge University Press; 21s. net.), by Dom Adrian Morey, M.A., Dr. Phil., is a learned and scholarly study of the twelfth century in England. This century has been increasingly studied in recent times, especially the years in which the struggle between Henry II. and Becket held the stage. Though much has been written about Becket, little or nothing has been written about his bishops, and yet many of them were able and outstanding men. The author of this volume seeks to do something to fill the gap. Choosing the Exeter bishop as his subject, he tells us what is known or can be reasonably conjectured about his life and career, and at the same time seizes the occasion to portray certain aspects of English Church life in the twelfth century, notably the working of the papal system of judges-delegate as seen in Bartholomew's administration of the canon law.

Dom Morey allows that the material available for the historian is insufficiently detailed to allow of any very intimate or convincing picture of Bartholomew's character and personality being drawn. But this much he thinks we may safely affirm: 'In elevation of character he was superior to the king; in restraint and diplomatic ability he seems to have excelled St. Thomas; and throughout he was the benefactor and personal friend of John of Salisbury. As regards both learning and religion he seems to have been all that an able bishop should be, and in this it is not claiming too much to assert that he was on the whole characteristic of the English episcopate of the time.'

One-third of the work is biographical, supplemented by an Appendix on the Early Archdeacons of Exeter and another on Charters and Other Documents. The rest of the work consists of an edition of Bartholomew's 'Penitential' with a suitable Introduction. The 'Penitential' is one of

the three theological works attributed to the Exeter bishop and conforms to the general character of the penitential, which was essentially a catalogue of sins and their punishments, intended as a guide for confessors in the exercise of their function. The wide popularity of Bartholomew's 'Penitential' may be gathered from the fact that no fewer than eighteen copies have come to light. In view of the slightness of the variations in many of the manuscripts, Dom Morey did not think it necessary to collate the whole eighteen, and indeed has been content to print the text of a single manuscript, the Cotton MS. Vitellius A. XII., which is now in the British Museum Library.

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DR. FOSDICK.

The S.C.M. Press has just published the first British edition of Dr. Fosdick's *Successful Christian Living* (6s. net). Some of the chapters have already appeared in 'The Christian World,' but much appears to be quite new. Dr. Fosdick has a place peculiarly his own, and it would be difficult to find any volume of sermons that one could give with more confidence to those who feel that much of the present-day preaching is alien to their own interests and thoughts. A large part of the volume deals with Social Reconstruction. Talking about the 'no-God exhibits' in Russia, Dr. Fosdick says: 'We have plenty of "no-God exhibits" here. If war and slums and lynching and penury in the midst of possible plenty are not "no-God exhibits," then there never has been one. We Christians have been tremendously concerned about theoretical denials of God in philosophy, but we never have been enough concerned about real denials of God in Society.' But Dr. Fosdick does not make the mistake of beginning with Social Reconstruction. The chapters on 'Six ways in which modern man can pray,' and 'Discovering what we can do with ourselves,' come before those on Social Reconstruction. And to those who say to him that they are interested not so much in what they can do with themselves as in what we ought to do with the world, he replies: 'I answer that I, too, am concerned about the world and that, if we follow far enough this trail we have started on, it will land us in the thick of the world. But, certainly, it is far easier to discuss the problems of the world in general than to face this interior challenge: The world being what it is, what can I get out of Me that is likely to do the world any good? That is not evading or forgetting the world's problem, but bringing it close to one's doorstep.'

HYMNS.

Two interesting books have been issued recently dealing with our English hymns. *Hymnody Past and Present*, by the Rev. C. S. Phillips, M.A., D.D. (S.P.C.K.; 7s. 6d. net), is an exhaustive treatise of three hundred octavo pages, treated with all the fullness of modern scholarship. The book is divided into three parts: Historical, Practical, and an Appendix giving a large number of technical notes and references. The historical development of Hymnology is treated with considerable detail, carrying the story from the Early Church through Eastern, Latin, and German Hymnody, and then a full account of English Hymnody with considerable stress upon the Methodist and Evangelical Movements. A critical chapter is devoted to new ideas in our present century. The second portion, devoted to the practical side of Hymnology, is very brief, with the result that the advice and information are not so practical as might be wished.

The second book, *The Highway of Praise*, by the Rev. J. R. Fleming, D.D. (Milford; 3s. 6d. net), is written on more popular lines in which the practical side is emphasized more fully. This is a very readable volume, giving interesting information about composers, together with some useful hints on organ music in Church worship. Some of the criticisms of the use of hymns at funerals and weddings are very trenchant, and useful suggestions are made. This is a book to be recommended to all who are working for the improvement of our Church music. It would make an excellent text-book for a course of addresses.

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Messrs. Allen & Unwin have published a new edition of Mr. Bertrand Russell's *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (12s. 6d. net). The author has contributed an interesting new Preface to this volume in which he makes changes in a few of his earlier statements. But generally his views on the philosophy of Leibniz have not changed since the book first appeared in 1900.

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Until he published 'High Country,' the Reverend Alistair MacLean of Daviot was little known. But that volume made him many friends. And now in *Walk in the Light* (Allenson; 5s. net.) his readers will have their last volume from his pen. After Mr. MacLean died, his friend Mr. Donald MacGillivray went through all the literary work he had



left and chose forty-eight short addresses. It is these that we now have, accompanied by a foreword by Dr. James Black, who says: 'It is finely characteristic of the interesting mind and personality of its author: for every address is beautifully conceived, suggestively illustrated, and artistically finished.' Those who do not know Mr. MacLean's sermons, but who have read 'Fearfulness' in 'The Christian Year' last month will want this volume.

Under the title, *The Distinctive Elements in Christianity* (T. & T. Clark; 2s. net), the Rev. Norman V. Hope, M.A., B.D., has translated the late Professor Karl Holl's essay, first published in 1925, *Urchristentum und Religionsgeschichte*. From the Foreword by Professor Hugh Watt one learns that this is the first of Holl's works to appear in an English translation. The four chapters of the volume deal succinctly, but clearly and authoritatively, with the subjects of (1) The Place of Christianity in the Oriental Religions, (2) Jesus' Conception of God, (3) Is Paul the Creator of Christian Syncretism? (4) The Paradox of Christianity.

In the first chapter, Reitzenstein's Persian redemption-mystery is critically handled, and the point enforced that the essence of Christianity does not so much lie in what it has in common with other religions as in what is peculiar to itself.

In the second chapter the peculiar and unique feature of Christianity is discovered in Jesus' reversal of the customary relationship between religion and morality (morality being here understood in a sense that includes obedience to ceremonial law). Whereas every other higher religion bases the personal relationship to God upon correct behaviour towards men, with Jesus God takes the initiative, with His forgiveness creating something quite new, out of which there at once arises a real and close fellowship with Him.

In the third chapter it is maintained that even if all that is said to-day be true regarding Hellenistic influence upon Paul, it was he none the less who kept Christianity from being submerged in Hellenism. The gospel is something different, he said, from all worldly wisdom.

The short final chapter invites us to recognize that in the history of the Christian Church progress and degeneration have taken place alongside of each other.

It was worth while to publish in English an essay of such grasp and comprehensiveness. It reads well in translation. We trust that a good reception of it in the English world will encourage the translator to give us more of Karl Holl.

*A Priest for Ever* (James Clarke; 6s. net) is a study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, comprising the Bruce Lectures delivered in Trinity College, Glasgow, in 1933, by the Rev. J. P. Alexander, Jedburgh. In a Foreword, Principal W. M. Macgregor commends the book as dealing with an epistle which should be more familiarly known, and as a patient and sincere effort to reveal its treasures.

After discussing the question of the writer and his friends, Mr. Alexander goes on to deal with the framework of ideas in which the portrait of Christ is presented—first, the writer's philosophy, 'The World to Come'; secondly, his fundamental conception of religion, 'Let us Draw Near.' After that he deals with the portrait itself—first, Jesus in His person, 'The Son of God'; secondly, Jesus in His work, 'Lord,' 'Over God's House,' 'A Priest for Ever.' The last two chapters have to do with the threatened apostasy in the community to which the epistle is addressed and with the writer's conception of faith.

Mr. Alexander has succeeded in covering most of the ground that an expositor may be expected to cover. He has made good use of recent English commentaries on the epistle. His own expositions are clear and pointed, and often lively, and show independence of judgment. He has obviously devoted much time and care to the preparation of this volume, and it deserves a good circulation.

Messrs. James Clarke & Co. have begun the publication of a new series of books, called 'The Challenge Series,' with three books, two of which are apparently new, the third being eleven years old. The new volumes are *The Church and the Churches*, by Professor Karl Barth (referred to elsewhere), and *The Essentials of Life and Thought*, by the Rev. G. Currie Martin, M.A., B.D., the Rev. T. Wigley, M.A., the Rev. Kenneth A. Saunders, M.A., B.Litt., and the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, D.D. The older volume is *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul*, by Professor John Baillie, D.Litt., D.D., S.T.D. This last is an admirable treatment of a fundamental theme, with a little of the gloss taken away by the fact that the writer has in his mind a situation that is already a little out of date. But the main contentions of the book are independent of date, and, in its cheap form the essay is sure to be popular and edifying. The least satisfactory of the three books is the second mentioned above. It might easily have come, in parts at least, from the Rationalist Press. The essay on Jesus is a negative affair that leaves nothing of

the historic figure of Jesus to account in any way for the influence He has had on the world. The writer too readily accepts negative conclusions of those he relies on for his own views, and the Jesus that is left would not cause a ripple on the surface of life. The other essays are on the Bible, God, and Man. It is a surprising thing that Professor Barth's book and this very 'Modernist' one should appear in the same series. The price of the books is 1s. each.

The Chaplain to the University of Glasgow, the Rev. Archibald C. Craig, M.C., M.A., has published sixteen of his Sermons and Addresses. It is hardly necessary to say that the sermons are scholarly, and they have been written by one who is in close touch with young men and young women. In 'The Christian Year' this month we have quoted a part of one of the Addresses—'The Presence of the Absence of God,' and so readers will have the opportunity of seeing for themselves the quality of the work. The Sermons deal with three subjects—Repentance, Faith, and Duty. The publishers are Messrs. James Clarke & Co., and they are to be congratulated on the attractive and dignified volume which they have produced at the price of 3s. 6d. net. The title is *University Sermons*.

To the growing list of up-to-date Jewish works on the Old Testament we have now to add an American commentary on Deuteronomy by a member of the staff of Dropsie College—*The Holy Scriptures with Commentary: Deuteronomy*, by Professor Joseph Reider, Ph.D. (Jewish Publication Society of America; \$2.50). It seems that a series of commentaries was planned some thirty years ago, but the only volume which appeared was one on Micah by Professor Margolis. Allowing for the fact that it is addressed to a Jewish audience, Dr. Reider's work will strongly remind the reader of Wheeler Robinson's commentary in 'The Century Bible.' It is true that it does not give the same impression of insight into the psychology and theology of its subject, but it has, on the other hand, useful notes on the Hebrew text, abundant citation of Rabbinic writings, and copious references to authorities like Robertson Smith, while a good deal of space is occupied with arguments directed against the Graf-Wellhausen school of criticism. It is interesting to note how often both commentators select the same phrases, and how often their remarks seem to coincide in substance, though not in language. As far as exposition is concerned, then, Dr. Reider has little to add to our understanding

of Deuteronomy itself, but his work will be found useful, not only by Jews, but also by Christians who wish to gain some insight into the traditional Jewish methods of exegesis.

At St. Ninian's, Lassodie, Fife, Scotland, a National Experimental and Conference Centre has been started, and a subsidiary enterprise is the publication of books by the Lassodie Press Ltd. A number of cheap, popular editions have now been issued at the uniform price of 2s. 6d. This affords a really good opportunity of getting some useful books at very reasonable rates. There is, for example, *The Sunday School in the Modern World*, edited by the Rev. D. P. Thomson, M.A., in collaboration with the Rev. Carey Bonner and Dr. James Kelly. This volume was originally published in 1924 by Messrs. James Clarke at 6s., and we had pleasure then in drawing attention to the wideness of the ground covered and the authoritativeness of the chapters written by Mr. W. Melville Harris, Mr. Carey Bonner, Principal A. E. Garvie, Principal W. M. Clow, Dr. Thisleton Mark, Principal Sydney Cave, etc.

The other volumes in this popular edition are *The Scottish Pulpit*, twenty-one sermons by some of Scotland's foremost preachers; *The Church in Changing Scotland*, by the Rev. Arthur H. Dunnett, B.D., who is Joint Secretary of the Church of Scotland Home Board, and Chairman of the Scottish Churches Film Guild; and *The Romance of Blantyre*, an account by the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, C.B.E., D.D., of how Livingstone's dream came true.

A reprint of *Winning the Children for Christ*, which was published by the National Sunday School Union in 1924, has also been issued by the Lassodie Press at the amazingly small price of 2s. There are a dozen contributors, most of them well-known names, like Professor J. G. Mackenzie, Thistleton Mark, Albert Belden, D. P. Thomson, and W. D. Miller. The object of the book was to present to teachers and others interested in the young the newer approach to children on behalf of Christ and the Church. It aims at relating the fruits of scientific research on the one hand and practical experience on the other to the religious development of the child and the problem of child conversion. There is a good deal of science in these essays and a lot of common sense. And it may be hoped that in this new issue their helpfulness will be largely extended.

Any one interested in the work being done by the Experimental Centre at St. Ninian's—the holding



of Retreats and Conferences; an Information Bureau, Colportage and bookstall—may obtain particulars from the Warden, St. Ninian's, Lassodie, Fife.

The 'Journal' of George Fox is well known, but his 'Pastoral Epistles' are very little known. 'A Collection of Many Select and Christian Epistles, Letters, and Testimonies. Written on sundry Occasions by that Ancient, Eminent, Faithful Friend and Minister of Jesus Christ, George Fox,' was published in 1698 but has only been reprinted once since that date—in 1831. In England in 1925 an anthology appeared prepared by Samuel Tuke, of York. This fell into the hands of Mrs. John Holdsworth (L. V. Hodgkin), and from it she conceived the idea of making an anthology herself, and it has now been published by Messrs. Macmillan with the title, *A Day-Book of Counsel and Comfort from the Epistles of George Fox* (7s. 6d. net). This is a fine addition to one's devotional library.

*His Part and Ours*, by the Rev. J. Sidlow Baxter (Marshall, Morgan & Scott; 3s. 6d. net), is described in the sub-title as 'devotional expositions gathering round the Scripture usage of the possessive pronoun "my"'. These expositions are in two sections, the first dealing with 'His Part' under such titles as My Grace, My Presence, My Peace, etc.; the second dealing with 'Our Part' under such titles as My Redeemer, My Helper, My Beloved. The writer is a popular preacher and expositor, and his method of handling Scripture is reminiscent of Dr. Campbell Morgan. He adheres closely to the text, and delights in comparing Scripture with Scripture. At times he brings out curious interpretations. He is not critical but homiletical; he does not argue, he rhapsodizes. His expositions are warmly evangelical and provide rich feeding, perhaps too rich for some palates. On p. 42 he repeats the traditional story of the hymn 'Lead Kindly Light' having been composed in the near prospect of the author's death in 1847, whereas in point of fact it was composed nearly thirty years before.

The National Adult School Union have published an excellent scheme of study with the title *Achievement and Challenge*, being the Adult School Lesson Handbook for 1938. There are studies by W. H. Leighton, George Peverett, and James L. Baker on 'Achievement: What Next?', on 'Modern Times and Modern Men' by T. Herdman, on 'The Great Society' by Gregory Chase, on 'The

Teaching of Jesus' by A. Frank Ward, on 'God's Way with Man' by Anna L. Littleboy. The price of the Handbook is in limp covers 1s. 6d. and cloth boards 2s. 6d. net.

With the beginning of a new year we have to draw attention to the excellent helps printed for Sunday-school teachers by the National Sunday School Union. There are first of all the graded courses, comprising *The Beginners' Concise Guide* (2s. 6d.), *The Primary Concise Guide* (3s. 6d.), *The Junior Concise Guide* (3s. 6d.), *The Intermediate Concise Guide* (3s. 6d.), and *The Morning Concise Guide* (2s. 6d.). They have also published most suggestive *Notes on the Scripture Lessons* (3s. 6d.). The Concise Guides are edited by Mr. Ernest H. Hayes, and the Notes by Mr. J. Eaton Feasey.

*The Religion of the Incarnation*, by the Rev. Ernest H. Rudkin, M.A., B.D. (Skeffington; 6s. net), deals with 'some selected subjects concerning Christian doctrine and personal belief inspired by the Archbishop's Recall to Religion.' There are twenty-one addresses in all, and they fall into three main divisions—The Godward Side, The Manward Side, and The Church. Besides these addresses there are an equal number of 'addenda,' each of which contains a brief and suggestive treatment of some topic relevant to the main theme. The expositions are simple and instructional, full of excellent preaching matter, and giving evidence of wide reading and a gift for apt illustration. The book should prove eminently helpful to teachers and evangelists who seek to present the Christian message in an orderly and convincing way.

Messrs. Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd. have published a volume of essays at 3s. 6d. by Mrs. Sophia H. E. Langmaid—*A Selection of Essays*. Mrs. Langmaid is a busy wife and mother, and it is only by the strictest economy of her time that she has been able to write these short essays. They are full of sound sense, and deal with such subjects as 'The Church and the Child,' 'How to Keep Young,' 'Modern Unrest—Its Cause and Effect,' 'Is Perfection Possible?' 'That Sunday Dinner—What It Means,' 'What Are We to Believe?'

We have already drawn attention to a series of valuable small books published by the S.C.M. Press—'Life in Other Lands.' Miss Hebe Spaul has now added *Czechoslovakia* (1s. 6d. net). Miss

Spaull has the gift of writing interestingly for boys and girls, and to-day, when it is more important than ever that the history, customs, and difficulties of other lands should be known, a series such as this is to be most warmly commended.

The latest volumes in the 'Religion and Life Books' (S.C.M.; 1s. net each) are *The Making and Meaning of the Bible*, by Mr. George Barclay, M.A., and *St. Mark's Life of Jesus*, by Professor Theodore H. Robinson, D.D.

## Fellowship in Worship.

BY PROFESSOR HAROLD ROBERTS, PH.D., WESLEY COLLEGE, HEADINGLEY, LEEDS.

THE idea of fellowship is peculiarly congenial to the modern mind. No programme, whether it be religious, social, or political, is likely to make a wide appeal to-day unless it takes account of the passion for fellowship that dominates contemporary life and thought. The generous reception accorded in some quarters to the totalitarian philosophy and to the various group-movements that have arisen within the Church in recent years is due in part to the fact that, in this regard, they have discerned the signs of the times. When, however, a certain idea becomes popular, it is soon overlaid with accretions which effectively obscure its meaning. This fate has befallen the idea of fellowship with the result that spurious forms of the real thing are distressingly common. An attempt will be made in this article to examine the significance of fellowship and to show that the way to its realization lies in worship which is the characteristic activity of the Christian Church.

### I

What is the meaning of fellowship? First, let it be said that fellowship is found rather than made, and it is found or given as the result of a free response to a common purpose. In a sense it may be described as the by-product of this response. Hence, every attempt to engineer fellowship by exhorting people to come together is bound to fail. Indeed, while the bringing of people together may be a condition of fellowship, nothing more than a vague fraternization is achieved unless those who are gathered are united by a common purpose. In the second place, the quality and permanence of fellowship are determined by the character of the purpose which gives it birth. People may be drawn together by a common interest of which fellowship is not an integral part. Fellow-

ship thus becomes a means to an end and is not regarded as having value for its own sake. It is possible for people who do not love one another overmuch to co-operate for the abolition of certain evils which endanger their personal or communal happiness. In such cases fellowship is but an expedient that is employed because no other method is available, and as soon as the end which it serves is attained, it is usually dissolved. Or, again, a nation may be galvanized into unity by fear of a common foe. When the occasion which aroused antagonism passes, the unity of the nation is often broken although the hatred and suspicion which have been allowed free play live on. It is clear, then, that the common purpose of which we are in quest must be universal in its appeal and provide a permanent basis for a fellowship from which every shred of hostility has been removed. Thirdly, fellowship cannot exist in a vacuum. We tend to speak of it as though it were something intangible—an atmosphere or a pleasant aroma. It is of the nature of fellowship to seek concrete expression in personal relationships. Fourthly, the law of fellowship is sacrifice. The reason why social life so rarely issues in fellowship is to be traced to the common belief that a recognition of the rights of others is the most effective method of securing our own interests. The prevailing spirit is self-centredness even if it sometimes clothes itself in altruistic form. It is only when men are content to abandon claims and counter-claims and take up their cross in devotion to a cause that is free from every selfish taint that fellowship is established on a sure foundation.

### II

The Church according to the New Testament is a fellowship, and ideally it bears the marks to which



we have referred in the previous section. It is described as sharing in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit—a phrase which characterizes the origin and quality of its life. The fellowship which the Church enjoys is the gift of the Spirit which is bestowed in response to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. We do not read that the earliest Christians organized themselves into a society in order that they might propagate more effectively the principles of a departed Leader. On the contrary, they found themselves in fellowship with one another through sharing in the new experience which had come to them by the life, death, and resurrection of their Lord. What are known as the marks of the Church—one, holy, catholic, apostolic—set forth plainly enough the character of its life as a supernatural fellowship. Its unity is to be traced not to any external pressure in the shape of a powerful organization but to the relationship of its members to Christ; they have fellowship with one another because they are 'in Christ.' The Church is described as holy since the spirit of Christ is reflected in its thought, worship, and practice. It is catholic—the experience of God which the Church enjoys is open to all—and apostolic—it is sent forth by God charged with the good news of His purpose for the world. The metaphors employed in the New Testament are equally emphatic in their delineation of the Church as a fellowship which has its source in the life of God Himself. It is the Body of Christ, the household of God, the holy temple—the dwelling-place of God's Spirit. There were many religious societies or clubs in the Empire in the time of our Lord but the Church was not one of them. It is the creation of God, and its nature can only be understood in the light of its divine origin.

There are four further observations to be made about the nature of the Church. First, its fellowship embraces heaven and earth. It is extremely doubtful whether the doctrine of the Communion of Saints interpreted as meaning unbroken intercourse between the living and the dead is taught in the New Testament. On the other hand, it is a fair inference from what the New Testament teaches about the nature of the Church. The members of the Church are made one by reason of their faith in Christ who overcame death, and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against those who share in the power of His resurrection. To be 'in Christ' is, indeed, here and now to be in heaven. 'God, being rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us . . . quickened us together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him, and made

us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus' (Eph 2<sup>4-6</sup>). Death cannot sever the communion of believers since the living and the departed are united by faith in the living Christ. Secondly, the fellowship of the Church is all-pervasive. Its members share not only in spiritual riches but in material goods (cf. Ro 15<sup>26-7</sup>). What is sometimes described as the early Christian experiment in Communism should not be brushed aside as a historical oddity; it was a serious attempt to deal faithfully with the implications of the 'partnership of the Spirit' (C. H. Dodd). The breaking down of barriers based upon economic status, sex, race is another instance of the out-working of this partnership. In the letter to the Ephesians (chs. 4-6), St. Paul gives an outline of the communal life of those who are 'in Christ.' Since there is one body and one Spirit, 'let him that stole steal no more, let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth . . . let all bitterness and wrath and anger . . . be put away . . . walk in love. . . .' The relations between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, are to be governed not by considerations of expediency but by the consciousness of membership in one body. Thirdly, those who have been called into the fellowship of the Church share the redemptive sufferings of Christ. There is nothing in the Gospels or the Epistles to encourage the view that the sufferings of Jesus were other than unique, but 'the fellowship of His sufferings' to which St. Paul refers in a characteristic passage does imply that the members of the body of Christ participate actively in the work of redemptive love. 'The cup that I drink ye shall drink' (Mk 10<sup>39</sup>). This promise was fulfilled in the life of the Christian fellowship. Fourthly, the corporate experience of the Church was expressed in specific acts of worship, prayer, and the observance of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Prayer and Sacrament sum up the characteristic activity of the Christian community, which is worship.

### III

The significance of Christian worship can only be understood in the light of the nature of the Church. As we have seen, the Church shares in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and it came into being through the response of men to the love of God mediated through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that response, the heart of Christian worship is displayed. It may be readily admitted that the spirit of worship is manifested wherever

men submit to the call of conscience or follow the vision of beauty or dedicate their minds to the disinterested pursuit of truth. Indeed, these interests must not be disparaged in the attempt to establish the uniqueness of Christian worship. They are inspired by the true light that lighteth every man, and instead of minimizing their significance when they are dissociated from the Christian revelation, the theologian should be concerned to interpret them in the light of that revelation, in which alone they find their fulfilment. On the other hand, the distinctive element of Christian worship is the response of the soul to the call of God in Jesus Christ. It is that act of dedication which enables the Christian to honour the claims of God over the whole area of human life. Where the primacy of the Christian revelation of God is ignored, worship tends to become pantheistic, and thoroughgoing pantheism is but another name for secularism. To say that God is everywhere is only another way of saying that He is nowhere. Hence, we need to beware of underestimating the importance of those acts of worship which enable us to concentrate our attention upon the Vision of God in Christ and to enjoy personal communion with Him. The adoration of God at regular times and seasons is only regarded as superfluous by those upon whom the wonder of Divine Grace has not dawned. Further, if worship means union with God in His redemptive activity in the world we need to wait upon Him in prayer to learn His will and to gain deliverance from the bondage of self-concern which constantly mars our service to God and our fellow-men. The Church has stressed the central significance of special acts of worship not because it is indifferent to other activities but partly in order that life in every part may reflect the glory of God.

Both the 'direct' and 'indirect' forms of worship to which we have referred presuppose corporateness. While there are some people who are prepared to recognize that the social tasks of the Church—the abolition of war or poverty—require corporate action they still cling to individualistic notions of private prayer and common worship. It seems necessary, therefore, to relate the theology of the Church as outlined in the previous section to particular acts of worship. Each man, it is true, must make his own response to the love of God, but by the very act of making it he ends his isolation. He takes his place in the household of God. He shares in the life of fellowship. 'If any man is in Christ he is a new creature': his thoughts, words, and works bear the imprint of the family to which he belongs. In every act of worship the

Christian is a corporate worshipper. He communes with God not as an isolated individual, even though he may be physically isolated, but as a member of the Body of Christ. While in private devotion his personal needs and responsibilities will loom larger than they do in public worship, he is not thereby separated from the Christian community, since even in the most intimate moments of a secluded devotion his relationship to God is still a family relationship. A Christian cannot pray other than as a child of God, and God only becomes accessible to us as Father in so far as we recognize the fact that we are not so many different units bearing no relation to one another but fellow-members of His household. 'We know,' writes Khomiakoff (quoted by Riley, *Birkbeck and the Russian Church*), 'that when any one of us falls, he falls alone, but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as a member of her and in unity with all her other members. If any believes, he is in the communion of faith: if he loves, he is in the communion of love: if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer.'

When we turn to ordered worship we find that, although it has many varieties, the elements of which each is composed bring out the corporate character of worship. In the simplest as well as in the most elaborate forms, place is given to confession, praise, aspiration, intercession, and dedication. If we examine these constituent parts, we shall find that they presuppose the idea of fellowship. We confess our sins, and what is sin but a violation of the spirit of fellowship. All sin is sin against God; but we cannot sin against God without sinning against His family which embraces all mankind. And the forgiveness that is offered to us if we repent means a deliverance from self-centredness into the fellowship of God and His children. When we make our offering of praise, we recall 'the blessings of this life,' many of which come to us through the sacrament of human hands. Chiefly, we give thanks 'for the redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ,' 'the means of grace,' which belong to the Church as a whole, and 'for the hope of glory'—the consummation of the eternal purpose of God for mankind. Each brings his own sacrifice of praise, but it is offered in union with the sacrifices of the redeemed in heaven and on earth. Our prayers of aspiration again are directed to a more perfect fulfilment of our function as members of the Body of Christ, while our intercession is of nothing worth unless it is the expression of fellowship. Finally, common worship should issue in an act of dedication, and the end



to which we consecrate our lives is a community which freely and gladly accepts the rule of God the Father. Nowhere is the corporate character of worship more plainly revealed than in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We come to receive Christ Himself into our hearts. He is present in every Eucharist and not even our sin can drive Him away. The Real Presence is not at the mercy of man's changing moods or ideals or theories. That Presence is symbolized by bread and wine which become the instruments by which the sacrificial life of Christ is conveyed to us. When we take and eat and feed on Him, we become incorporated in His redeeming purpose and share in the life that was obedient unto death. God gives us Himself in Christ and His nature is Love. Where love is, there fellowship abounds. Hence we meet at a common table and the differences which bring discord and disunity into human life are gathered up in this service into a richer harmony. Here death itself does not divide, for the congregation embraces angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. And when we separate, we resume our daily tasks not as so many isolated individuals but as fellow-members of the Body of Christ who have received heavenly food for the journey that ends in the City of God.

While it is true that every recognized type of public worship seeks to express the idea of corporateness, it cannot be denied that there are some forms in which the idea is only realized by the average worshipper with difficulty. 'In the early Church,' says Father Hebert (*Liturgy and Society*, 75), 'the deliberate effort was made to divide up the functions of worship among as many people as possible. The Bishop was when possible the celebrant, and was surrounded by his priests who (at least at Rome) con-celebrated with him; the deacons headed by the archdeacon, and the sub-deacons had their share in the reading of the lessons and the ceremonial of the altar: chanters and choir, acolytes and doorkeepers all had their place; the people, too, had their share in the action, in the offering of the gift and the kiss of peace and the communion.' Here we have an ideal which we need to recover in the ordering of public worship. The ritual of Low Mass, for example, in which the congregation takes no part but is united to the action of the priest by intention, as well as the average Free Church service at which the congregation 'assists' only by the singing of hymns, can hardly be regarded as an adequate representation of the corporate character of Christian worship. It may be admitted that in Low Mass the corporate

principle is not ignored since those present who apprehend its meaning are able to link their private prayers with the ritual action of the priest and thus share in the worship of the whole Church. And, again, in Free Church services, the congregation may be and often is conscious of itself as a fellowship; through the prayers and the sermons its members are inspired to offer their worship to God as one Body. Nevertheless it is easy in either type of service to fall a prey to individualistic devotion and to find oneself 'solus cum solo' which is not the pattern of Christian worship. (For fuller treatment of these points, cf. Fr. Hebert's book already quoted and Miss Underhill's recent volume on *Worship*.) The question of the reform of public worship does not enter into the scope of this article, but it is certainly important that any changes in the forms of worship should express its corporate character. A worship that is truly corporate sets forth as nothing else can the nature of God's purpose for mankind. Here barriers of class, race, and culture are broken down, ancient feuds are ended, and men are united to one another not by any act of their own but by a common response to the Incarnate Love of God in Jesus Christ. This fellowship is governed by love, and the discipline which love entails is willingly accepted, for it is creative of a life that is 'disinfected of egotism,' balanced and enriched by the unlimited resources of the Communion of Saints, and dedicated to the establishment of God's rule over every human concern.

The worship of the Church, alas, falls short of this ideal, partly because all men have not yet responded to the Love of God. We shall not fully know the wonder and majesty of Christian worship until the children of God in every nation bring their gifts to the altar and take their place in His family. The missionary work of the Church is, however, hampered by the disunity of Christendom. There is so little fellowship in worship between members of different Christian communions and so imperfect an understanding of those forms of devotion adopted in Churches other than our own. Christian re-union means fellowship in worship, and we can hasten its coming by a reverent attempt to appreciate the devotional life of our fellow-Christians in other Churches. But there is yet another stumbling-block. We all have to confess our frequent failure to realize fellowship with the members of the Church to which we belong. Our worship is often public without being corporate. It is plainly futile to talk of communion with the saints in heaven when we are barely conscious of

a link with the saints on earth who worship with us. The solution is to be found not by making a deliberate effort to check our individualism but by such a rediscovery of the nature of our faith as will enable us to perceive that an approach to God that denies or is indifferent to fellowship is sheer idolatry. And let it not be forgotten that fellowship in worship means sharing in the material

things of life. The degree of reality that obtains in special acts of prayer and praise and in the observance of the Sacraments may be tested by our willingness to baptize all our personal relationships, social and economic, into the service of God. Then and then alone will the worship of the Church become the expression of the eternal purpose of God and the instrument of its fulfilment.

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## The Return of Theology to the Church.

BY THE REVEREND JAMES D. SMART, M.A., PH.D., GALT, ONTARIO, CANADA.

THE unfortunate fate of Karl Barth in the English-speaking world is that he has come to be regarded as the founder of the latest religious movement. Barthianism, in the minds of many, is classified alongside Buchmanism. Each has a special set of terms of which one grows frightfully weary when trying to carry on a conversation with devotees. Buchmanites talk of 'guidance,' 'quiet hours,' and 'life-changing,' where the Barthian talks more loftily of 'the otherness of God,' 'the nothingness of man,' 'death,' and 'resurrection.' There is also the fact that so many who have 'taken up' with Barthianism have done so avowedly because of what they call the religious vitality of it; it gives them an assurance and earnestness which have a good effect upon their preaching; it makes them feel more reality in their faith. But it is for reasons very similar to those that other men have turned to Buchmanism. It is little wonder that the impression has gone abroad that Barthianism is just another religious movement which will have its day, will make a contribution to the Church's life as such movements do, and then will pass into the limbo where all such peculiar religious ideologies go.

To others, more thoughtful, Barthianism represents a set of theological ideas, well worthy of our consideration, and which we may adopt either in part or as a whole. The favourite attitude is to recognize with gratitude several much needed emphases in Barth's theology, and then to wave aside the remainder as hardly worth our attention or incredible to a really enlightened modern theologian. Again and again we hear of Barth's great contribution to the Church in redirecting men's minds to the

transcendence of God, but such statements are usually followed by conditioning sentences which make of transcendence a conception far removed from anything which Barth teaches. It would be far better if such men would refrain from trying to steal Barth's so-called 'values' for themselves, and, recognizing simply that he thinks differently than they do, would let him speak his own mind fully and truthfully as a mind distinct from theirs.

Then there are men who seek and find in Barth a satisfying theology. He brings their minds to rest, quiets all their doubts and uncertainties, resolves their religious problems and perplexities. They accept as a whole and with enthusiasm the set of ideas which he presents. One writer describes the achievement of Barth as the erection of a great massive structure of Reformed theology. The word 'structure' suggests a building erected by one set of men that others may dwell in it in comfort. Many have already moved into the Barthian structure because they find it more comfortable and suited to their minds than any of the other theological structures.

All these points of view manifest an ignorance of the central intention of Barth's work in theology. He has no interest in a Barthianism by which men seek to lend a new vitality to their Christianity. Nor is he concerned that men should 'accept' his theological ideas, either as a whole or in part. His concern is to re-establish theology in the Church as a primary function of the Christian ministry. He seeks to bring the Church back to theology and theology back to the Church. To those who come to him seeking a satisfying theology, he offers instead an invitation to work with him in the



labours of the Church's theology. They seek a pleasant tree under which to rest, but he gives them a spade and shows them a plot in the garden in which to dig. He thrusts upon us the recognition that there is no theology which we can adopt, no theological position in which we can rest, but only a theological task at which we must work incessantly as the inescapable responsibility of our ministry.

It will be admitted without argument that this strikes the ministry of the Church to-day at its most vulnerable point. There are few who recognize serious work at theology as an integral part of their duty to the Church. One tries to keep in touch with what men are thinking, but in the busy life of a minister of our day, intensive theological studies find little place. To suggest that they are at least equal in importance with pastoral visitation and organization work, and thus should have a place made for them, would elicit only a smile. The general conviction is that theology, though important, may safely be left as the peculiar function of students and professors.

Theology, as Karl Barth describes it and practices it, belongs not in the College but in the Church. It is a function of the Church or it is nothing. In the opening pages of his 1932 *Dogmatic*, which with reason he calls *Church Dogmatic*, Barth lays plainly before us the nature of theology as it originates in the life-situation of the Church. The Church through its ministers is constantly proclaiming a message which it claims to be the Christian message. In all its life and activities it is acting upon definite principles which it holds to be Christian. But at the same time, unless we are entirely blind to realities, we know that the Church's message is in many respects untrue, and that there is always an element of falsity in the principles actuating its life. There may be some Christians who would not make this admission; they assume the perfection of their Church and the complete adequacy of their own message. But the true Church is humbler. It is ever acutely conscious of the imperfection of all that it does, and of its message being at best a poor stammering makeshift for the truth which it professes to represent. It knows that untruth in its message and falsity in its principles are the chief agencies in bringing it down to ruin and in frustrating the purposes for which it exists. In this situation, what shall we do? What escape is there from this dilemma? Theology is the one means whereby a way out can open before us. With full earnestness we must undertake the critical examination of every aspect of the Church's life and message that we may escape

from untruth into truth. We must take up the position of watchman over the Church, that we may guard her from error both from within and from without. Our minds are constantly exposed to the varied intellectual and religious currents of our time; our thoughts are shaped imperceptibly by the influences we meet. But in theology we mount guard over our own thoughts and bring them under the judgment of the truth which is God's truth. Theology is thus the Church's one safeguard against error. Neglect of it leaves the door open for ideas and beliefs, which are Christian only in their appearance, to come slipping in and establish themselves in respectability within the Church. Neglect of it means that we have become careless about the question of truth.<sup>1</sup> If this, then, is the function of theology, it is difficult to see how any minister can evade the responsibility of theological work without being definitely unfaithful to the Church. This part of his duty must stand as a primary obligation of his office demanding a generous portion of his time.

The same thought may be put in a more direct and personal way. I stand in my pulpit and declare to my people what I believe to be the Christian message. In another Church, another man from his pulpit declares to his people a very different message which he believes to be the Christian message. Are we not to be concerned which is the truth? Are we to take the usual easy tolerant attitude, that every man has a right to his own point of view and that the Church is broad enough for all our messages? Or might not we too, as fellow-Christians, undertake a discussion together which would be not an attempt on the part of each to convert the other, but an attempt together to search out the truth of the matter? That would be theology. Tolerance is the order of the day, an easy tolerance, and if tolerance means that we always remember, even at the height of our conviction, that the other fellow may have some truth on his side, then who can be against it? But tolerance in the Church to-day has come to be nothing more or less than *an evasion of the question of truth*. It must land us eventually where some have already landed, in saying that truth is

<sup>1</sup> Some may object that I omit what is most important when I say so little of the standard by which theology judges the Church's life and message. The standard is the Church's nature, Jesus Christ, the word of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Theology seeks to keep the Church true to its nature in all things. To discuss this in the present article would carry us too far afield.

not the main element in the minister's message but personality, character, and sincerity. To be intolerant of untruth does not mean that we adopt the Pharisaical attitude of being critical of other men and satisfied with ourselves. It means before all else that we become *intolerant of the untruth in our message and principles*. We become intolerant of untruth because our loyalty to truth demands it of us and because we are convinced that it is truth and truth alone which can make men free. In this concern about the Church's untruth and our own untruth, theology is born. When the acute distress and agony of this situation breaks in upon us personally, we are driven to theology. Some seek quick temporary solutions in various religious movements and projects. But the need which must be met is a permanent need, and the one permanent solution is that there should be in the Church a theology which would *constantly* be subjecting to critical scrutiny the whole of the Church's message and the principles which are motivating its life.

Denunciations of ministers for their lack of interest in theology are common enough. But much is to be said in their defence on this point. The blame is not entirely theirs. Their lack of interest is due to a large extent to the nature of theology in its modern developments. It has become of such a nature that it lacks vital interest for the man in the pulpit. It has come to be something in which a man may take an interest *alongside* his work as minister, just as he may maintain an interest in art or mathematics, but he is conscious, sometimes acutely conscious, that he is riding two horses. Why is it that theology has come to be regarded as an occupation for students and professors but not for active ministers? Is it not because theology has more and more centred itself in the life-situation of the man of culture and the university rather than in the life-situation of the Church? It has become divorced from the Church by its interests and questions ceasing to be those with which the Church is concerned in its life day by day.

The change in the orientation of theology began with Schleiermacher over one hundred years ago. We might say of him that he moved theology out of the Church into the school. He set theology to a new task, the defence of religion against the intellectual currents of his time which challenged its validity. But that involved him in another task. In order to defend religion, he had first to define in comprehensible terms the nature of religion. One has only to examine recent books, such as Oman's *The Natural and the Supernatural* and Baillie's *Interpretation of Religion*, to see that

the orientation of theology in its main stream has remained essentially the same down to the present day; it has before it the same two objectives—to define the nature of religion and to defend it against the intellectual points of view which the student meets in the realm of learning. It is predominantly academic, and it is because its interests are centred in the academic life and not in the more commonplace and timeless life of man which the Church has to face day by day that ministers have ceased to feel that theology is a primary concern of their work.

We may illustrate this from two departments of theology—Old Testament and Philosophy of Religion.

The development of Old Testament science has been one of the epoch-making achievements of the last hundred years. The Church owes a lasting debt of gratitude to the men who have devoted their lives to establishing the frank and intelligent investigation of the Old Testament. But this department of theology has tended to renounce all theological interest and to become a purely scientific examination of the literature, the history, and the religion of the Hebrew people. The idea seems to be widely held that to be scientific it must be untheological. Attention is concentrated upon technical questions of the literature and history almost to the exclusion of all else.<sup>1</sup> But the minister finds that technical questions and critical theories and reconstructions are dry food for a man who has to speak a living message to his people. He can see a definite preparatory value in these things, but it is a source of constant amazement to him that this Old Testament science fails him so often when he seeks help in interpreting the *message* of the Old Testament. How often does it happen that he turns away from the critical commentaries in disappointment and drops down to the level of the uncritical 'devotional' commentaries!

As a second illustration, consider the history and philosophy of religion which has been displacing the study of Christian dogma. The development may be traced briefly. Schleiermacher, having set theology to the task of defending religion against its cultured despisers, had first of all to define what religion is. He took experience, his own experience and that of Christians within his sphere of observation, as the most defensible source of knowledge. He tried to define the nature of religion as an existing phenomena in himself and in those about

<sup>1</sup> One has only to examine any issue of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* or any other 'Biblical' journal to see that this is true.



him. Ritschl sought an improvement in the results by broadening the sphere of observation to take in the religious experience of the whole of Christian society from the beginning. He held to the original principle that by examining religious experience one should be able to arrive at a true definition of the nature of religion. A further widening of the sphere of investigation was inevitable when the similarity of much of Christian experience to non-Christian religious experience was recognized; the data had then to be drawn from the whole religious experience of man. Thus the present-day science of religion is the natural culmination of Schleiermacher's theology. It takes as its aim, as Baillie says in *The Interpretation of Religion*, 'to be able to announce to the world both what religion is at all times and what it is in its highest form.' Theology by an all-comprehensive study of religious phenomena is to give us a final answer to the question 'What is religion?' Flesh and blood, man by his research, shall reveal it, and no longer shall we as individuals be like Peter needing our Father in Heaven to reveal it to us in our hearts and lives. Intellectual comprehension will have made revelation a superfluity. Surely Barth had reason to call this 'modern theology's attempt to build a tower of Babel up to God.' But there remains a consciousness in the Church, however confused, that the philosophy of religion can never tell us the essential things we need to hear about God and life. The same consciousness remains often in the philosophers of religion as a discordant element in their thought. There is reason for the feeling of the average minister that this wide research into religious phenomena, however interesting it may be, has really no *essential* place in the life of the Church.

Some words of Dr. J. H. Jowett in an address to the English Congregational Union in 1906 are of interest in this connexion. After speaking of the help derived by him from the various theological disciplines, he went on to say—'But I would have the entire discipline taken a step further, and I would be taught its direct bearing upon actual sin and sorrow, upon moral health and moral degeneracy, upon spiritual atrophy and spiritual endeavour, upon the fears and pessimisms of the aged, and the opening wonder and curiosity of the child.' He felt the need for a theology centred not so much in the special intellectual problems of a cultured class but rather in these deeper problems, these problems which are the same in every age, these eternal questionings in the hearts of the people before us on Sunday which have brought them there into the Church in the hope that they

may find an answer. Edward Thurneysen puts it very forcefully in the closing words of his book, *The Word of God and the Church*—'Life rises up before us and makes its claim. What does this theology mean for life? Does it mean anything? We know what life is—folly, error, sin, injustice, passion, drunkenness, mammon, war. That is life, but still more, it is death. It means men who are out of work, women who are being exploited, children who are growing up without the sunlight, rich who are prisoners of their money, poor who have sunk down into bitterness. What does it mean that, in the midst of this life, you as a theologian found a theology, work at exegesis and dogmatics, and preach sermons? Is it not clear that if the one does not come within sight of the other, if our theology and this life have nothing to do with each other, if when you are sitting by your study-lamp with your problems you do not keep in mind the brother who lives there outside in the labourers' district in the distress of his poverty, or in the fashionable quarter in the distress of his wealth, indeed, if it is not definitely for the sake of this man and because you have him in mind that you work at your theology—then what use is all your theology?'

It was life rising up like that before them in all the naked reality of its need which made Barth and Thurneysen strike out in a new direction in theology. In a rare personal reference in his first book of addresses, Barth tells us how he went to his first congregation, well armed with a system of theology which was a combination of the teaching of Wm. Herrmann and the traditional doctrines of his Reformed Church. Then, as he realized the nature of the work he was attempting to do, as he saw that he must have a word which would be a living Word of God to speak into the actual situations of life, that the word he spoke must actually be food for men's souls, he found that his theological training had left him completely unprepared. It had not even suggested to him the nature of this task with which he was now confronted. That was the puzzling thing to him. Theology had been concerned with other and less vital matters. Therefore he set out not to found a new theology but to draw the attention of theologians to the fact that they were neglecting these matters which are most vital of all. He wrote his commentary on Romans to show that exegesis of the Scriptures must go beyond critical analysis and the understanding of a passage in the light of the times. His contention was that as exegesis the modern commentary leaves the main task untouched. Its chief and final

task is the theological task—so to interpret the words of Scripture that the walls of the centuries which divide us, for instance, from Paul, become thin, and we hear him asking our questions and receiving answers, divine answers for himself and for us. The final task of Biblical science is that the living Word which sounded in the ears of the men of the Bible may sound forth into the ears of men to-day.

And in theology in general, Barth's function, as we have already seen, has been to bring theology back from the school to the Church. He asks the question—Is it not because theology has taken this other task and has left the Church's real theological task untouched that Protestantism finds itself in an evident process of disintegration to-day? Protestantism is divided not just into two or three camps but into hopeless individualism. If you ask—What does a Protestant believe? or, What is a Protestant's religion? you will get answers which range all the way from pantheism to rationalistic orthodoxy. We can understand what is meant when a prominent convert to Roman Catholicism says—'Whoever has become weary with the confusion and inconsistencies of a Protestantism which embraces every shade of world-view, finds such rest in the uniformity of the Catholic Church and in its great fellowship of faith and worship and prayer that it becomes painful to remember the disunion and the privation of Protestantism.' How *can* the Protestant Church have any authority with the world when every time it opens its mouth on any question, a perfect babel of voices comes forth? It is a sense of this need to escape from its contradictions, a sense that this confusion of voices must mean loss of influence and authority, which is inspiring most of the union movements of to-day. They are attempts to counteract the radical individualism into which we have fallen. But by external means one can expect to achieve only an external unity. Something deeper is needed. The true unity and the true fellowship is when we find ourselves standing shoulder to shoulder under the light of the same truth.

But how can we escape from our individualism and find our way back to each other that we may be bound together not by a mere bond of good

fellowship but by a common bondage to the truth? How can the disintegration of Protestantism be stopped and the opposite process forwarded? A temporary expedient is useless, worse than useless, for it may lead us into a false security. The source of the trouble lies in the very nature of a church of men—that our truth is always mixed with untruth. The question of truth is the critical point in the life of the Church. The chief obstacle to Christianity is not the unbelief of the world, not the untruth of prevalent intellectual points of view, as much present-day theology presupposes, but the deficiency of *our* message and *our* principles in regard to Christian truth. The great achievement of Karl Barth is that he sets in the spade at this point and establishes theology as the indispensable function of the Church and its ministry. The only hope for the Church to escape from paralysing and demoralizing untruth is that ever afresh it should be bringing all things in its life and message under the light of God's word and submitting them to the most intense and searching critical scrutiny.

There are many who seem to fear that Barth is seeking to establish a new orthodoxy as the solution of these problems of Protestantism, and they fear the big stick of orthodoxy more than the dangers of unlimited individualism. A new orthodoxy would be irreconcilable with Barth's conception of the nature of theology. It is in the very nature of theology that it is always incomplete and must ever be starting afresh. There can never be a completed theology. All Barth asks of us is that we should cease to rest content in our individualism, that we should take seriously that there is such a thing as *the* Christian truth, and that our Church is a true Church only in so far as our truth is *the* Truth. When that point of view takes hold of a man, he *has* to work at theology as a sacred responsibility before God. To neglect it becomes an act of unfaithfulness in his office as a minister. When the history of the Church in the twentieth century is written, this alone would cause the name of Barth to mark a great turning-point, that through his work theology should have found its way back to its watch-tower over the Church's life.



## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### Catching the Train.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN B. DAVIE, M.A., LEITH.

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'—Ec 12<sup>1</sup>.

I once knew a boy who lived in the country and travelled daily by train to and from school in the nearest city. Like many other young folk he was generally very loathe to go to bed at night, and as a result he often felt rather sleepy-headed and lazy in the morning, and had a tremendous scamper to be in time for his train. One morning he came panting on to the station platform just in time to see the train steaming out. 'Man, Jamie,' said the station-master, 'if you had run a bit harder, you'd have caught the train.' 'Oh,' replied Jamie, 'I ran hard enough, but I didn't start soon enough!'

Boys and girls, there is a railway called Life, and at the end of it there is a station called Success, and many people miss the train to Success, not because they don't run hard enough, but because they don't start soon enough to catch it. They dawdle and take things easy and waste the opportunities that come to them early in life, and find they can never in later life make up what they have lost. How many men I have met who have deplored to me that they did not take fuller advantage of their opportunities at school! They had worked hard, and got on so far in their calling, but found the way blocked to further promotion largely through lack of education or qualifications, and they wished, when it was too late, that they had 'stuck in' harder to their lessons at school.

I know there is an old proverb which says: 'It is never too late to mend.' That is a very blessed and comforting truth. Thank God, no matter how we have failed, it is never too late to mend our ways. But I venture to suggest that a thing which needs mending is never quite so good as a thing that has never been broken or spoiled. And, in any case, that proverb is one for older folk. Let me suggest a better proverb for you young people: 'It is never too soon to start right.' If you are to make a success of life, the sooner you begin to seek it, the more likely you will be to reach it. Therefore, make the most of your opportunities *now*! Work hard at school. Cultivate habits of diligence and thoroughness. Remember now . . . in the days of thy youth!

But here in church, boys and girls, we are reminded that there is another and finer kind of success than worldly success. Have you ever thought of this? A man may be a soldier, a sailor, or a candlestick-maker, or anything else—that to some extent is an accident of circumstances—but he can never be anything else than a man! And therefore his main task is to make a success of being a man! What does that mean? We learn that from Jesus Christ. He was the one perfect man who ever lived, and so the highest success we can attain in life is just to be Christlike in our character and life. But if we are to make our lives Christlike, it is never too soon to begin; for the longer we delay, the more firmly set we become in our habits of life; and if they are bad habits, the harder and more difficult it is to master them and to turn to better ways. And therefore, boys and girls, begin to serve Christ *now*. Don't say to yourself: 'There will be plenty of time to serve God later, when I grow older.' It is never too soon to start right. Give yourself into God's keeping *now*, and make up your mind to serve Him faithfully henceforth.

In the glad morning of my day,  
My life to give, my vows to pay,  
With no reserve and no delay,  
With all my heart, I come.

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#### Filaments.

BY THE REVEREND R. A. HARDY, B.A.,  
BLACKLEY, ELLAND, YORKS.

'Ye shine as lights in the world.'—Ph 2<sup>15</sup>.

Do you know what a filament is? If you look at a clear electric lamp when it is lit you will not forget very soon. For that brightly shining circle of wire in the bulb which gives out so brilliant a light is the filament of the lamp. You cannot bear to look at it for long, and as you turn your eyes away you must think how wonderful it is that so tiny a piece of wire should be able to light up a large room. Hour after hour it goes on gleaming. The word filament, according to the dictionary, comes from a Latin noun which means 'a thread' of cotton or wool. And that is what the first successful electric-light filament was—just a cotton thread.

The story of the invention of the electric lamp should inspire us, because it is a triumph of patience and endurance. The chief hero was the world-

famous inventor, Thomas Edison. For a long time he had been in search of an inexpensive material which would give light when charged with electric current, and would not break easily. To-day we use thin metal wire, but in Edison's early life such wire was unknown. Some men who believed in the genius of the great inventor had raised a considerable sum of money to meet his expenses, and for twelve months he worked with little or no result. Many people turned against him, and some of his backers thought their money was lost. But Edison laughed back at his critics on 21st October 1879. On the day before, he twisted a piece of cotton thread into a horse-shoe shape, and sealed it in a glass bulb which was gradually exhausted of air. Then a current of electricity was passed through the filament. It glowed brightly! How long would it last? Thousands of other filaments, made of every conceivable substance, had only shone at the most for a few minutes. This fragile filament, however, was of a different sort. Hour after hour it gleamed forth through the night and into the next day, until it had attained forty hours of life. Thus was the first electric lamp born. Edison now tried to make the filament shine even more brightly, but in giving it more electric current he broke it. It is very amusing to read of the weird mixture of materials used by Edison in his search for a durable filament. Tissue-paper, horse-hair, silk, hemp, etc. Even hairs from a human head were tried. One of the assistants, of the name of Mackenzie, had a red beard, and several filaments were made from it. The hair filament burned brightly, but soon shrivelled up.

Now, a good filament is not necessarily the thickest or toughest. Everything depends on its being able to hold a high charge of electricity. And this is true of human beings also. Although we are weak, yet it is wonderful what good we can do and what help we can give, if only we can keep the power and love which our Lord Jesus gives to us. We have seen how soon some of Edison's filaments were burnt out. They shone wonderfully well, but only for a time. And some men and women, and boys and girls too, are like that. They get tired and give up. In the Bible Jesus speaks of good men as lamps illuminating the dark world. And we know that Jesus is the Light that lighteth all the world. So if we are to shine for Him, we must be filled with His spirit of love.

Lead lives of love; that others who  
Behold your life may kindle too  
With love, and cast their lot with you.

## The Christian Year.

SEPTUAGESIMA.

Doing the Impossible.

'And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus.'—Mt 14<sup>28-29</sup> (R.V.).

The thing that holds our eye and grips our heart in this amazing story is the figure of Jesus riding the storm. This power-story fascinates us, because it so manifestly is an exhibition of power, explain it how we will. Also the element of sheer risk gives it added colour and piquancy, the utter abandonment of Jesus to a high way of living, and His complete regardlessness of the beaten paths of safety. But above and beyond all such considerations is the feeling it awakens in our minds that our Lord here is challenging us to rise with Him to another and higher type of life than the one we normally live. Tertullian long ago said of Jesus: 'He became what we are, in order that we might become what He is.' The feeling persists in our minds that this picture is not simply a unique and solitary display of exceptional power, but is really an acted parable of the type of thing a Christ-filled life should be.

That this is not a fanciful interpretation is clear from the reaction which the vision of Jesus awakened in Peter's mind. 'Bid me to come to thee *upon the waters*.' This request was not motivated by his affection so much as by his spirit of adventure. He wanted to live his life on the same basis as Jesus. Who amongst us would not wish the same? And the life of Jesus, calm, strong, and adequate, as for one moment we glimpse it here battling successfully with the crude and colossal forces of Nature, as elsewhere with the forces of society, becomes for us the norm to which all adventurous hearts aspire. But how are we to get on to this power-level of life?

The first step in this overcoming life is *consciously to direct our wills towards Christ*. John Bunyan in a memorable phrase characterizes faith 'as a leap from the ladder blindfold into eternity.' Yet there is something defective in this definition, for the eyes of faith are not really bandaged. There are always present two elements in a genuine faith—seeing and following, perception and loyalty, intuition and courage. Peter's faith, as it exhibited itself here, was not a blindfold leap into the dark. He had the intuition that Christ was out there beyond him, on the waste of the heaving waters,



waiting to welcome him. He was sure he had heard His voice, was certain he had seen His form. Even although that form was new and unfamiliar, it was that vision that called forth his faith. He not only saw, he resolutely followed where he saw. It is at this point that most people become limp and hang back.

'It is an enterprise,' says Clement, 'it is an enterprise of noble daring to take our way to God.' Look what it meant in Peter's case. His initial act of faith was, to use a phrase of Kierkegaard's, 'a desperate sortie.' Peter was an experienced fisherman, and he knew the terror of the sea. It was, indeed, an enterprise of noble daring to step out of the comparative safety of his boat, and walk in the darkest part of the night into a boiling sea, and into the teeth of a tempestuous gale.

How many of us have the courage to face up to the demands of a faith like this? Are we prepared to give up our fancied securities, and commit ourselves to a risky and uncertain course of life? Are we prepared to leave the familiar and face the unknown with Christ? Are we willing to step off the material basis of life, the basis of prudence, expediency and human calculation, and step out on to the spiritual basis of life, relying on no arm of flesh for support but on Christ alone.

The second point is to *realize that this daring and adventurous type of life is precisely the life to which Christ calls us.* 'Bid me to come to thee upon the waters,' said Peter, and Christ said, 'Come!' The commentators on the whole are less than just to Peter in their interpretation of his motives for acting as he did. They are disposed to look on this request of Peter's as a gratuitous display of swagger and presumption, and they interpret Christ's invitation as designed to teach a foolishly reckless disciple a salutary lesson on the folly of overweening ambition. But surely such an interpretation is quite alien to the method of Jesus.

When Jesus says, 'Come!' He means us to come. He put all His heart behind that invitation to Peter, and nothing disappointed Him more than Peter's failure to come all the way.

Jesus loved the man who was prepared to play big stakes for His sake. He would have subscribed to the sentiment of R. L. Stevenson, 'Life is an affair of cavalry, a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded.' Like the Psalmist He would have said: 'I hate a man who is half and half.' He loved adventurous and even reckless natures that spilled the red wine of life in prodigal love and selfless devotion at His feet.

Professor Joseph McFadyen draws attention to

our Lord's fondness for the word 'all'—'giving all,' 'forsaking all,' 'sacrificing all,' 'loving with all the heart, mind, and strength.' His great men and women are those who flung everything into the scales on His side—the widow who flung all she had into the treasury, the pearl merchant who sold all that he had, Peter who forsook all his friends and his security for the privilege of going to Christ on the water. This spirit of utter abandonment of self and goods to causes and spiritual values supremely worth while appealed to Jesus, because it was akin to His own nature. His was a giving life, and when He gave, He gave with both hands freely. He kept nothing back, not even His life. 'This is my body,' He said, 'and it is broken for you, my blood and it is shed for you.'

The third point to notice is *the astonishing success of the venture of faith.* We must not allow Peter's temporary failure to cloud for us our appreciation of his achievement. So long as he lived his life on a supernatural basis he was gloriously equal to all the forces arrayed against him. He only failed when he slipped off that basis on to the nature level. Dr. Fosdick quotes the penetrating observation of an American journalist: 'There are plenty of people to do the possible. You can hire them at forty dollars a week. But the prizes of life go to those who can do the impossible. If a thing can be done, experience and skill will do it. If a thing can't be done, only faith can do it.'

Emerson says: 'They can conquer who believe they can.' That claim needs qualification. To be sure there is a large measure of truth in it. There are powers resident in the human will that have never been exploited. The amazements of history are the achievements of men like Napoleon Bonaparte, who carved their way to fame and power through an indomitable faith in themselves. But no degree of self-confidence will ever give us power to do the humanly impossible. Peter with all his self-confidence could not walk on the water. He could swim through the water, and on another occasion he actually did take this method of reaching his Master, but he could not walk on the water, with all the self-confidence in the world. Well, here he is doing the impossible thing, and he is doing it, not because he believes in himself, but because he believes in Christ.

Faith is the faculty by which we tap the resources of God, and the limits of faith are set, not by our personal exertions, but by our capacity to appropriate the power of God. If we believed in Christ enough, we should do the impossible too. That is the measure of the task that we, as Christians, are

set in the world to do. We are here to do impossible things, to attempt impossible tasks, to bring to pass impossible results. 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'

One word of appeal to those whose lives are not lived on a faith-basis. Let us see that we do not put the challenge of this incident lightly aside, as if it were something that did not concern us. On the contrary, it is a matter of grave concern, because our response to this challenge determines our way of living. Life is not a matter of choice, it is a relentless necessity. Whether believers or not, we must face its imperious demands. Of necessity we must make the same voyage over the same waters. The journey is not a matter of choice, it is only the way that we travel that is.

We are living in troubled and unquiet times. Forces dark, inscrutable, and sinister are gathering on the horizon. Even the boat to which we cling offers no sure security. At any moment a great sea wave, some sudden cataclysm, may destroy it and overwhelm us. All our material securities, the things that stand between us and the ultimate disaster, are of the flimsiest kind. The only real question that faces us is how we are to fare through that inky darkness and across that risky way? The Christian policy is to capture the secret of riding the waves with Christ. It is to dispense entirely with the use of the boat, and in the illuminating phrase of Walt Whitman: 'To make friends of the winds and the weather.' This victory over circumstances, this conquest of the world and all its forces, this independence of all security except the security of God are given only to those who, like Peter, venture all for Christ and count the world well lost for His sake.<sup>1</sup>

#### SEXAGESIMA.

#### The Presence of the Absence of God.

'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.'—Ps 130<sup>1-2</sup>.

Chesterton says somewhere that there is a great difference between the absence of the presence of God and the presence of the absence of God. This sounds like a jingling trick of words, but it is seldom safe to dismiss Chesterton at that. I think he is distinguishing between complacency and hunger; between our human eagerness to justify and save ourselves and the spirit which has nothing to say except, 'If thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' but which

still can look expectantly to God, hoping in His word. It is the difference between the man who preens himself in view of his achievement, polishing each leaf of his gathered laurels, and Isaac Newton confessing at the end of his life that he had gathered only a few pebbles on the shores of truth; or St Paul, strong and sweet and spiritual, writing to the Philippians, 'I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Complacency is 'the absence of the presence of God': hunger is 'the presence of the absence of God,' and contains the promise of life and growth and satisfaction.

Karl Barth and his followers have done our generation the distinguished service of pressing home with power the truth that what we call 'religion' or 'religious experience' is always in danger of lying on the wrong side of this contrast. The cardinal sin of man is pride, the refusal to acknowledge his deep, constitutional sinfulness and to undergo the experience of being pardoned, and consenting to live in the state, so unthinkable to self-will, of entire submission to the Divine will. Man wants at all costs to justify himself. This is a central motive of humanism in all its varied manifestations, even the most idealistic of them; but, according to Barth's analysis, it is equally the motive of much of what passes for religion. In one camp Christ is acclaimed as the product of the human race, worn like a feather in the cap of humanity, or carried like a flag or mascot in the van of idealistic enterprise. But the individual man who resolves to be Christlike does not always impress his neighbour with Christlikeness. The 'Christian' nations, proclaiming aloud their desire and intention to have done with war, occupy themselves at Geneva with months of dialectics, and go home to re-arm. It is one thing to take Christ's teaching as the last word in human idealism: it is another thing to recognize in Christ's teaching the revealed will of the Lord of heaven and earth.

In another camp the whole traditional scheme of Christian faith (including, of course, a belief in the divinity of Christ) is taken bodily over into the control of men, translated week by week into appropriately solemn rites and discourses and practices, managed by men, and by men harnessed to the chariot of the world's need, as men understand that need. But in all this there may be no surrender of human egotism; the whole transaction may be conducted on a horizontal plane on which men

<sup>1</sup> R. Menzies, *The Magnet of the Heart*, 131.



retain their assurance and self-will. For all their multiplied labours and organized campaigns, the Churches do not actually transmit salvation to mankind or make the wilderness to blossom like the rose. They did not prevent the War, nor are they leading the nations with any obvious authority into the reality of reconciliation. It is one thing to take over the traditional Christian formulas, expounding them and seeking to insert them like a mainspring into the mechanism of the world's life—over all which human operations there must still be written, 'the absence of the presence of God': it is another thing, and not within the power of men and Churches, to be born again and to be commissioned and enabled by the Spirit of God.

Near the ruins of the Border abbeys you may see, built into the walls of comfortable little dwelling-houses, fragments of carved stones which once formed part of the sacred edifice. Here it may be a lintel inscribed with a text from the Vulgate, there a corbel in the form of a pomegranate or a bunch of foliage. Is that not a symbol of what much modern religion has done with Christianity? It has taken this little fragment of doctrine and that little piece of artistic ritual, and fitted them into an essentially human scheme of living, but it has lost the sense of the transcendent God whose prerogative it is to be obeyed, and in whose will alone is our peace and security. The most hopeful sign of our times is that we are beginning to suspect that a man-made civilization is not so secure as it sometimes looks, even when it salutes Christ with a show of deference.

'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.' This Psalmist had learned three lessons which men and Churches have to learn over and over again.

First, he had learned to realize the darkness and danger of his situation in view of the holiness of God. He compares himself to a watcher by night, let us say to a military sentry. When a sentry stands at the head of a sap and looks out into the eerie darkness, there is not much danger of his mistaking his real situation nor of his settling down to comfortable musings about human life and destiny. He knows his personal peril and his personal responsibility. Do you think that vitality will ever come back to religion before religion recovers a piercing sense of the fear of God? Shortly before he died, William James congratulated his contemporaries that they were able to pass from the cradle to the grave without knowing the meaning of fear. Can we corroborate that verdict to-day?

Secondly, the Psalmist, crying to God in his distress and anxiety, learned that God speaks and can be heard by men who listen intently. I remember once taking out a platoon of a Training Reserve Battalion on night-exercises. We marched out into a large field, halted, and for a few minutes stood in the blackness of a very dark night, listening quietly. When the men were asked what they had heard, there was brisk answering, for the exercise was novel and a welcome change from the monotony of the barrack-square. All had heard the bark of a dog and the rumbling of a belated lorry; some had heard the movements of another platoon in the next field, and so forth. At length, a country-bred lad made the astonishing statement, 'I heard the sound of running water about ten yards away.' Yes, it was true: a practised ear had detected, and it was possible for all now to detect the sound of a runlet which had its course beneath a hedge and spoke with a quiet, continuous voice. Once it had been heard, the gentle sound of that unhurrying water seemed to be the very voice of the night itself. There is a voice of God which speaks to men who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It does not cry aloud above the noises of the world; it has to be listened for in quietness and intentness of spirit. That word of God to man is Christ—not the Jesus of the humanists, the projection into history of their own idealisms—but the Christ of God, risen and ascended, constraining and commanding, judging men and offering them His terrible gift of pardon.

Lastly, having heard the word of God, the Psalmist learned the meaning of faith and dared to believe all things and hope all things. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.' How should we not hope all things, if the word which God speaks is the word of pardon? How should we not believe all things, if Cross and Resurrection and Ascension are God's word to the sinful world? <sup>1</sup>

#### QUINQUAGESIMA

##### On Believing in the Love of God.

'And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us,'—1 Jn 4<sup>16</sup>.

But have we? We may know the story of God's great love in word and deed, but have we *believed* it? Are we living as if we did?

Some natures find it hard at times to believe in the affection even of their best friends. So strong a character as George Eliot, for example, was not

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Craig, *University Sermons*, 59.

exempt from this weakness. She writes to one of her close friends: 'I can't help losing belief that people love me—the unbelief is in my nature, and no sort of fork will drive it finally out.'

Choice spirits who give a lead to others have 'this rare faculty not only of "supposing" and "inclining to think," but of knowing and believing.' So we read in our Carlyle, and when Carlyle wrote this he had been reading life. Convictions are more effective than mere opinions, and convictions imply a ripe insight which is not dependent upon hearsay or any indirect touch with reality. What furnishes stimulus as well as steadying confidence within the Church is the presence of people who are able to say, *We have known and believed*, not simply 'we incline to think,' or 'we suppose.' Sometimes we do not know what we believe; we may well have less faith than we imagine that we possess, or perhaps more faith than we think. Again, the true quality of our belief is not always what we assume it to be. No, it is one mark of sensible people to know what they really believe, but it is also a note of moral health to believe in what we know, that is, to live by our convictions; for who can expect to be sound or vital in religion if he is not putting what he knows about God into action and application, daring to put it to the touch? Therefore, as we value religious sincerity and effectiveness, we had better be asking ourselves, 'Do I know and believe God's love, or is it little more than vague hearsay than an abstract idea?' We say occasionally that we have a working knowledge of some subject, meaning that, while we do not pretend to understand all its details and technique, we do know enough of it to make it a working power in our ordinary life. Now the goodwill of God has issues and methods that are mysterious, sometimes terribly mysterious: in this world we can only hope to have some working knowledge of His love. But the question is, Have we even that?

In the first place, we may make it difficult for ourselves to believe in God's love if we neglect the supreme proof of it in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is all very well to cry, with Browning—

'God! Thou art love! I build my faith on that.' But 'that' is itself a faith which requires to be built on something deeper, and what is that deeper foundation but the redeeming purpose of God manifested in the Lord Jesus? His life is the interpretation and proof of God's love, as nothing else can be. And whenever this core and centre of our religion is forgotten or undervalued, the result before very long is an uncertainty about the love of God, an uncertainty that spreads till it renders

people weak and vague and sentimental, even with the unsentimental New Testament in their hands.

Then selfishness weakens the sense of God's love. Our faith in a sense depends upon our life. We really cannot believe higher than we behave. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. When we allow ourselves to slip into unforgiving habits of intercourse, into a cynical or uncharitable temper, or into any ungenerous attitude, when we fail in plain duty and service to our fellows, we are destroying the power of believing in love altogether. A mist rises from the low marshes of preoccupation with ourselves which clouds our vision of God's love. For how can that love be in any sense real to us if brotherly love is not a reality?

But, even apart from all this, it is frequently a strain to believe in God's love when we encounter in our own lives or in the lives of others some of the tragic, staggering facts of the world. Even the dutiful and innocent meet things that seem to deny outright any love divine. We remember in *Hamlet* how Laertes finds his sister driven insane by cruelty, and how, listening to the poor girl raving, he cries aloud, 'Do you see this, O God?'

*The love God has*—in our shaking world, in our desperate poverty, in our empty homes, in our broken hopes, in our incurable diseases, in our crushed affections. *The love God has?*

Yes, *the love, the love God has for us*. For He has not changed. We may perhaps help ourselves to believe in His goodwill by falling back upon two considerations which have often helped to rally the uneasy. The first is, that His love is not mere fondness, but alive with a moral purpose, and that if He denies us something it may be because we shall be the stronger for doing without it. Then, again, we need to bethink ourselves that what happens to ourselves is part of a wise, large order extending over all the world—a mysterious order which goes beyond our individual intelligence.

Such considerations do not avail to answer all our questions. But surely they help to persuade some of us, in our dismay and resentment, to take the larger view that the Lord may not have forgotten to be gracious.

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, sets down in the first part of his diary what he owed to the influence of this person and of that in his life. Among other items he notes this: 'From my brother Severus I learned to cherish good hope and to believe in the love of my friends.' Have we not to learn the same kind of lesson that the pagan saint learned, and to learn it here and now in relation to our God as well as to our friends? I



it be weak and even silly to let ourselves become incredulous about the loyalty of friends, if it is unreasonable to distrust an affection which cannot always be expressing itself, is it not equally morbid to be uncertain about our God, when prayer for a time seems to be unheard, or when we cry out into what appears to be a silent, empty universe? Shall we not venture to believe that His purpose still holds good? In fact, is that not what we are really doing when we repeat the Lord's Prayer? For, as we pray that prayer in the spirit of the Lord, we are not calling upon God to fulfil some duties which we are afraid He may be likely to forget; it is not to remind Him of His responsibilities, but rather to remind ourselves of what He has surely promised to do for us and with us in the fellowship of His Son. We say 'Our Father,' to inspire our confidence anew in His purpose of good.

There are inconceivable things in this world, plenty of them, but surely for us, inside God's household and order, the most inconceivable would be that, after all that has passed between Him and us, He has for some reason lost interest in His children and creatures. We can believe much, but not that—no, not for a second!

Hold to it, then, hold to it as a fixed point, without any ifs or buts, that His sure purpose is not proved to have broken down. They do tell us, in some corners of our knowing, sceptical generation, that such religious belief is 'the most empty and pretentious of notions,' a 'mere form of neurosis,' no more substantial than a rainbow that plays prettily over the plunging cataracts of human heart-break and agony in this loveless, godless universe. That we know, they tell us, that we believe. So be it. But they are wasting their wisdom if they try to lecture men and women out in the open, who, whatever sights daunt them, see the Cross of Christ with the life that led up to it and the life that streamed from it, the life that still streams from it, into any wilderness that human beings make for themselves by doubt and disobedience. Their testimony is otherwise; it is, that at this time of day we are not acting unreasonably or presumptuously when we look up out of any bleak, bare place and tell ourselves, 'God is mindful of us, God will continue to take care of us, come what may.' And this is no solitary faith. We are not saying it for the first time, and we never say it alone. Join them, for they are a great and growing company, join those who are wise enough and brave enough to confess, 'We have known and believed the love God hath to us'—even to us, and even to-day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Moffatt, *His Gifts and Promises*, 234.

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

### Our Lord's Temptations—and Ours.

By THE REVEREND HARRY Q. MACQUEEN, M.A.,  
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'One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'—He 4<sup>18</sup> (R.V.).

The late Dr. Stalker once asked a company of young men whom he was to address what subject he should deal with, and received the reply: 'There is only one subject worth speaking to young men about, and that is temptation.' That was, of course, an overstatement, but did indicate a sense of the vital importance of the subject, which is, indeed, one that profoundly concerns everybody. The temptations of age differ from those of youth, but no one entirely escapes from the furnace of trial so long as he wears the garment of mortality. This is a warfare from which there is no discharge. And temptations are innumerable in variety, being closely interwoven with people's characters, temperaments, and circumstances. What is a strong temptation to one is no temptation at all to another, nor are we subject to the same temptations at different stages of our development.

That our Lord Himself was subject to temptation should save us from despair when we are sore beset and imagine ourselves outcast from the way of purity and goodness. When evil suggestions arise in our minds, or when we are tempted to trifle with truth, or to turn from the rugged path of duty to languorous ease, we should recall that Jesus, our Lord, was 'tempted of the devil.' Even He, the Pure and Holy One, had to fight such battles. Therefore, clearly, temptation is not in itself sinful; it only becomes sin when coquetted with, embraced, unresisted. St. Augustine described the progress of temptation as 'a thought, a picture, a fascination, a fall.' Sin enters in at the second stage when we dwell, with pleasant dalliance, on the suggestion which has arisen in the mind.

The inward spiritual struggle endured by our Lord at the outset of His public ministry is generally called 'The Temptation,' but it must be remembered that it was only one of His temptations, as the Evangelist indicates in the words—'the devil departed from him for a season.'

Our Lord, who alone could have given His followers the account of this inward struggle, clothed it in vivid, pictorial language; but the graphic imagery must not blind us to the reality of the struggle. Such struggles are always intensely lonely—always 'in the wilderness,'—and always fierce—'with the wild beasts.' And the time is

also significant. Assaults of temptation may come when least expected; that is part of their subtlety. The attack does not always come in an hour of conscious weakness, when one might be on one's guard; often it comes in the train of some great hour of the soul. This outstanding temptation of our Lord followed hard on the assurance of Divine approval at His baptism. Happy are they who have armour, prepared beforehand, instantly available against sudden attack, who can fall back on some sure word of God. 'It is written . . .' There often lies the secret of victory.

The circumstances of this particular set of temptations seem to have been these. Jesus—prepared through 'the silent years,' by communion with Nature, by the discipline of a lowly home, by intercourse with His fellows in carpenter's shop and village street, and by meditation on the teachings of the Law and Prophets—was now conscious of an urge to go forth and proclaim the message of the Kingdom which burned within Him. But, being truly man, who must reach his decisions through travail of soul, He saw not clearly, as yet, the best way of accomplishing His mission. Could He accomplish it by alliance with one of the existing parties? He passes in review the prevalent systems of the time, feels their allurements (and we may admit that there was much of good in them, while remembering that the corruption of the good is the worst), and then resolutely puts them, one by one, aside, and starts on a lonelier and more weary road which led to victory for the cause of God, but only by the way of Calvary. The rejection of the other ways, in spite of what they had to offer, was His victory in the Temptation.

The leading parties of that time were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Herodians, and they were much more than merely political parties, and sought to influence more profoundly the lives of those who adhered to them. They might be compared with present-day Fascism, which seeks to dominate life in a way that older parties did not attempt to do; or with Communism, which is for many people a religion as well as a political and economic system.

In considering the party of the Sadducees, Jesus would notice that stress was placed on the survival of the nation, which would be a good thing if the nation were to remain true to her high destiny, conserving those great religious values for which she had testified and suffered throughout her chequered history, and being 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' as prophets had conceived her mission. But mere national survival, while surrendering

religious vocation, our Lord would regard as a seduction of evil; and this was what, in practice, Sadduceism had come to stand for. As Stephen Liberty says: 'The possession of the Temple and the whole religious heritage of the nation were an asset, not for the winning of the world for Jehovah, nor even for the establishment of an independent theocracy, but for the glorification and enrichment of a few ruling families.' In figurative language 'bread,' merely material sustenance, was what the Sadducees had come to stand for; therefore Jesus resolutely put from Him the idea of working with or through them, with the words: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

But could He work with the larger and more popular sect of the Pharisees? These people did believe in the national vocation; they held that God's people should be separate and holy; they demanded strict obedience to the Law, and were eager proselytizers. They read, though not understandingly, the Messianic prophecies. Jesus realized that they might wish Him, if He cast in His lot with them, to accept the rôle of Messiah, as others had done. This spectacular method—doing something dramatic of their own devising, and expecting God to approve and confirm it—was really 'tempting God,' that is, devising tests for Him. 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God' was the answer of Jesus to this temptation.

There was yet another party, the Herodians, which might conceivably be the instrument with which He could work. Could He fulfil His vocation as 'Son of God' by alliance with them? Stating it briefly and crudely, the Herodian policy was that of worldly common sense: it was the policy of compromise. The Herods were attempting to weld Gentile populations together, under nominally Jewish sway, by an alliance with Rome, the price of which was a tacit recognition of heathen gods. Jesus rejected with scorn the thought of such compromise—'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve.'

In some such way did our Lord consider the appeal of the various parties of His day, and He rejected each in turn as He noted the temptation inherent in it. To strive to fulfil His calling through one or other of those parties would have been the easy way, since it is always easier to make use of what is at hand than to be a pioneer. But He saw the snares—neglect of the nation's true destiny; 'tempting God' in the sense of seeking to compel (as it were) His intervention; and worldly compromise—and so to adhere to any of these parties,



as a means to attaining His end, appeared to Him a temptation of the devil. He, therefore, rejected the allurements of these parties, and went forward on that long and lonely road that led past the Tree to the Triumph.

And because *He* had to face life in lonely agony of soul, feeling the fascination of lower ways and

rejecting them, though they might seem to lead more quickly to the goal, we, in our trial hours, may be sure of understanding and of aid. 'We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Wherefore, *Sursum corda!*

## The Authority of the Bible To-day.

BY THE REVEREND HEDLEY HODKIN, M.A., MORPETH.

IN seeking to persuade either a jury or a political meeting, the speaker, whether barrister or statesman, has to consider not only the cogency of his reasoning and the best method of presenting the facts, but equally the mental powers, habits, and prejudices of those to whom he speaks. In inquiring how we may lead the men and women of our generation to an acceptance of the authority of the Bible, we must not only be able to explain clearly in what that authority consists, but we must understand some of the characteristics of what is called 'the modern mind.'

'The modern mind'—not in general or in the abstract, but that mind as it approaches and views religion—how can it be explained? It is sceptical, credulous, critical of organized religion, full of reverence for science and the scientific method—but the characteristic which concerns us most here is this—it is a generation which has lost the sense of God and of a spiritual world. The cause of this fading of the consciousness of God from the life of our time is not far to seek or difficult to explain. We are living towards the end of one of the most exciting and sensational eras of scientific progress and change in the history of mankind. For four thousand years the economic life of man hardly changed at all. All that our great-great-grandfathers knew of science and of engineering in the eighteenth century was known to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Then within a few generations the whole face of the world and the economic bases of life were fundamentally changed by the development of machinery, engineering, and scientific knowledge and method. Now, it is a psychological fact of human life that the range of man's interest and attention is limited. Charles Darwin, for instance, confessed sorrowfully towards the end of a life of austere and noble devotion to scientific study that 'he could not endure to read a line of

poetry, that Shakespeare nauseated him,' and that he lost all taste for music and pictures—to the consciously felt impoverishment of his life. Similarly our generation has been so dazzled and fascinated by the achievements of science that it has not been able to give attention and thought to the spiritual world, with the result that the sense of this other and higher world has been lost. As F. J. A. Hort pointed out over sixty years ago, 'Everywhere we have offered to us a higher world and a lower. The lower world is always the most tangible, obtrusive, alluring. The higher world is always the most impalpable, secluded, severe.'<sup>1</sup> Happily, however, we are said to be near the end of this era of scientific advance, and, like children too long engrossed with their own toys and amusements, we are beginning to look around and to be aware of another, a wider, deeper life around and above us.

By one of the ironies of history this age of scientific advance coincided with times of great intellectual and spiritual poverty in the life of the Church. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, apart from the great Cambridge school of Coleridge, Julius Charles Hare and Frederick Denison Maurice, the Church in England was quite unequal to the demands of the new age, clung suspiciously to outworn forms of belief, and regarded science and the new knowledge as an enemy. At this time the scientific method of study applied to the books of the Old and New Testaments shattered the old view of the authority of the Bible, but the insight and courage to put a better one in its place were lacking. The position to-day is this—just as the mind of our generation is beginning to feel after God and to realize the need for religion, it feels perplexed, uneasy, uncertain about the Bible. Has not the Bible been 'disproved' by science, is the

<sup>1</sup> *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, 161.

question asked. If we cannot believe the story of Creation, if we cannot respect the character of the Patriarchs, if we cannot find accurate prognostications of the future in the prophets, nor direct and detailed guidance for our lives in the Gospels, what is there left to seek?

The true, emancipating, inspiring view of the meaning of the Bible—as expounded for instance by Professor Dodd in *The Authority of the Bible*, must be set forth clearly and unequivocally. It is true, we must explain, and we are grateful for it, the Bible does not possess external infallible authority which we are required to accept without questioning or the testing of experience. If authority is thought of as the power to enforce that kind of obedience, then the Bible has none such. Even if what was held to be the teaching of the Bible were to be enforced by some external human authority, whether of Church or State, that would not be to vindicate or secure the authority of the Bible, but merely to compel a slavish and irreligious conformity to external precepts. The authority which the Bible has, it has simply and solely as a revelation of truth, and, as Professor Dodd insists, ‘authority in the absolute sense resides in the Truth alone, or, in religious language, in the mind and will of God. In so far as the Bible possesses authority in religion, it can only be as mediating the truth, or as the Word of God.’<sup>1</sup> Our age has a great respect for fact and truth, and in claiming for truth this final and ultimate authority over our minds we should win instant agreement. We should go on to claim for the Bible that it reveals two truths, or rather two aspects of the one truth—namely, the truth about human life and the truth about God.

What is the truth concerning human life which the Bible reveals?—that our human life is not self-sufficient, self-sustaining, and self-redeeming, but that it lives by and needs communion with God. ‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ ‘Whom have I in Heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for evermore.’ This is the central conviction of the Bible and the fact which it everywhere insists upon and attests. In the Bible we see human life stretching from the dawn of history to the first century of our era, human life under the most varied conditions and meeting the most varied experience, yet always aspiring towards, seeking after, and conscious of its need of the Eternal world. Whether it is primitive man wandering in deserts or tilling the land, civilized man living in

cities, trading, building, fighting, writing, thinking, always and everywhere he shows this constant characteristic, he looks beyond this world of sense and time and reaches out after God. This history of human life suggests inevitably that while animals find all that they need in a purely this-worldly environment, man has been given and has developed powers and capacities which can find no full satisfaction in the life of sensation and appetite, and which, so far from making him contented and at home in this world, disable him in it. Human life, for instance, has conscience with its knowledge of right and wrong, its intolerable remorse, remorse which only the forgiveness of God can remove; it has depth and tenderness of love which cannot endure the thought of death apart from the knowledge of eternal life; it has a power of memory and imagination which make life a nightmare of fear and terror until the love and care of God are known and trusted.<sup>2</sup> When this deep need of human life for a living relationship with and knowledge of the unseen is ignored or forgotten—the Bible would teach us—life is eccentric, abnormal, unhealthy. When the mind and heart of man live and rest in God, then they reach the greatest fullness of joy and meaning of which they are capable.

The second truth which the Bible reveals is the truth concerning the Being and Nature of God. The Bible is the story, as we have seen, of man aspiring and groping, but still more it is the book which unfolds that spontaneous self-disclosure of the Divine, that unveiling of the mind and heart of God, which we call Revelation. Immeasurably deeper and far more important than man’s seeking for God is the Divine search for man, and the Bible is the history of that search. At the heart of this world is an infinitely wise and holy love whom we call Father, a love which counts the hairs of our head, notices the fall of a single sparrow, a love which forgives our iniquities and heals our diseases, a love which does not remain in selfish isolation in some dim and serene Eternity, but which from the beginning of time has been ever seeking to communicate life, love, its very self to man, a love which called and spoke to the prophets and to the psalmists, and which in the life of Jesus became incarnate and took flesh for us. The Bible is the book which describes this cardinal event in the life of mankind, this supreme sign and sacrament of the love which seeks—the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The Bible offers these two twin truths to us, the truth about life and the truth about God. It does

<sup>1</sup> *The Authority of the Bible*, 289.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Farmer, *Things Not Seen*, 13 f.



not call upon us to accept them merely because they stand written or because some one else has said that we ought to, but to verify and prove them for ourselves. If experience and testing bears out and establishes these truths, if the acceptance of them gives to heart and mind that joy, power, and repose which only truth can give, then the authority of the Bible is vindicated. This authority is now seen to be essentially propædæutic; that is, it places men in the right attitude for forming a judgment and puts the true facts before them. However great the probability that we shall agree with and accept this authority, however certain it is that the evidence for the highest truth 'is to be found in the light which it brings, far more than in any light which it receives' <sup>1</sup> the obligation to test it remains.

We have noticed some of the characteristics of the mind of this generation, we have considered what the Bible is and in what its authority consists, it remains to inquire explicitly what is meant by leading the men and women of our generation to an acceptance of the authority of the Bible, and how it is to be done. It is certainly not sufficient to persuade them to hold the correct view of Biblical inspiration, to give a purely speculative assent to the general teaching of modern criticism. We should not be content to leave the modern man believing that the Bible reveals religious truth in the same way in which he believes that there is a Sultan of Zanzibar, or that the Quantum Theory is an established fact of science. By accepting the authority of the Bible we mean that he should not only read and study but live in the revelation given there, until the awakened soul hears God speaking, responds and gives heart, soul, and mind to Him. Our aim is not to lead men and women to argue about the Bible or to accept the latest critical views of this or that book in it, but to read it, to understand it, and to see in it the offer of Eternal Life.

A political correspondent of one of the large daily papers recently criticised the debating methods of a Cabinet Minister in this way—the Minister was said to be in the habit of employing every argument that came into his head instead of concentrating on one or two of the strongest. In persuading men to read the Bible we must use, not every argument that we can think of, but only our strongest, and it is this—the Bible is the book, the only book, in which we can learn about the life and mind of Jesus. 'For the Christian Faith the Scriptures are a unity—at bottom the Old Testament and the New Testament have only one Word of God to proclaim,

and that is the message of Christ Himself.' 'The Bible is the crib in which Christ lies.'<sup>2</sup> Our generation, with its blindness and deafness to the spiritual world, is difficult to approach with a religious message, but it offers a very promising and hopeful avenue here—it is interested in and fascinated by the Incarnate life of Christ. It is not exaggeration to say that more is known to-day about the Life lived under those Syrian skies than in any age or generation since the days of the Apostles, that more lives and books about Him have been written in the last fifty years than in the previous five hundred. Taking advantage of this new knowledge and of this awakened interest, this—in some such words—should be our method of persuasion and approach.

There is much in the Bible which is difficult to understand and much that is not relevant to life to-day, but it does tell us about the life and mind and about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Knowledge of Him is the most precious and necessary knowledge that there is. Let us read the Bible at first, then, for no other reason than to know Him.

His life in the Gospels has been compared to a night sky, 'the longer you gaze at it the greater the multitude of the stars.'<sup>3</sup> As the 'blinding rheum of familiarity' is washed from your eyes by reading and reflecting, a Figure will come before you alive, arresting, original, and beautiful beyond our three dimensional æsthetic and moral standards. You will find yourself wondering at the depth, power, and simplicity of His mind, at the range of His extempore parables, at His swift and conclusive replies, at His appealing humour. You will wonder still more when you see how amazingly His mind stands out above and beyond the mind of His contemporaries and of the ages—in His attitude, for instance, towards women and children, and towards Nature. Even St. Paul hardly follows Him here—close disciple though he was—for he can still regard women as inferior to men, he doubts whether God cares for oxen, and misses Christ's attitude towards children (a child, to St. Paul, is an immature adult, not a member of the Kingdom of Heaven). If you find yourself wondering at His mind you will be amazed and awestruck at His character. Like His garments on the Mount of Transfiguration, it shines with an unearthly radiance and loveliness. The complete absence of self-consciousness, the deep compassion, the tender pity, the responsiveness to the needs and conveniences of others, the mercifulness towards publicans and

<sup>1</sup> E. Brunner, *The Mediator*, Eng. tr., 172.

<sup>2</sup> Merezkovsky, *Jesus the Unknown*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> F. J. A. Hort, *The Authority of the Bible*, 11.

sinner, the gentleness to little children, the love even unto death, the immeasurable power held in reserve—these qualities speak home to our hearts, they exercise authority over us, they constrain love, adoration, worship.

Begin then, our persuasions will continue, with the Gospels, with St. Mark and its vivid life-like touches, its infinitely loving detail, St. Matthew with its massive unity and careful recollections of the words of Jesus, 'the most powerful, the most beautiful, the most superhuman words ever uttered in human language,' St. Luke with its portrayal of the gentleness and compassion of Christ, St. John with its depth and richness of meaning, 'Love's memory of Love Incarnate with the marks of a great devotion writ plainly upon it.'<sup>1</sup> After the Gospels you will be led on naturally and inevitably to read the Epistles, for you will wish to understand the significance of that life and its creativeness in the lives of others. Then, realising 'that the Old Testament is the dictionary of the New Testa-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. E. Raven, *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*.

ment,'<sup>2</sup> you will want to read the Psalmists and Prophets, for they will all help you to understand Him. As you read, and go on reading, the Bible will—to use the vivid phrase of S. T. Coleridge—find you at deeper and deeper levels of your being until you will be convinced and sure that the Bible has the authority which is claimed for it.

*The Cambridge Bible for Little Children* does not begin with Genesis, with Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings, but with the life of Jesus, with what He did and taught. Then, under the chapter heading, 'Stories that Jesus would read and know,' it gives extracts from the Old Testament. Our method with adults must follow the same road. As it is only in Christ that can be found 'the power to persuade a sinner to return, to bring home a heart to God,'<sup>3</sup> so only in Him is the power to persuade us sinners to read and to accept the authority of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of F. D. Maurice*, i. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Leighton, quoted S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (Bohn's edition), 104.

## Contributions and Comments.

### The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke xvi. 1 ff.).

C. H. DODD, in his recent study *The Parables of the Kingdom* (p. 29), speaks of this parable as 'very difficult,' and notes that to it 'the Evangelist has appended a whole series of morals.' This is in illustration of his previous statement that 'there are grounds for suspecting that in many cases the application was not part of the earlier tradition, but was supplied by the Evangelist, or by his immediate authority, representing no doubt the current exegesis in that part of the Church to which he belonged.' The present note examines the second of these morals, rather than the parable itself, because it is extraordinarily difficult to understand in the mouth of Jesus, and hardly less so as primitive exegesis. Indeed, it is this v.<sup>9</sup> which seems to have cast the shadow of its own obscurity over the story it is supposed to explain.

The verse in the American Standard Version reads as follows: 'And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.' Moffatt renders 'when you die' instead of 'when it shall fail,' reading the ἐκλείπητε of <sup>MS</sup>ω Lat. Syr. Hl. instead of the ἐκλείπη of <sup>MS</sup>AB\*DLN. The difference is not material for the interpretation of the verse here put forward, though the Revisers' Text makes better sense, and has strong support from the great Uncials.

The difficulty of the verse, of course, is that Jesus, or a very early interpreter, is made to commend a course of action in which the end justifies the means. The contrast to other Synoptic teaching is so pointed that one is perplexed: 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon'; 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth'; 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the



earth'; and so on. The text as it stands suggests a cynical worldly-wisdom foreign to the Gospels, and is in equally obvious contrast to the moral teaching of Israel's sages, that friends made because of one's wealth are as temporary and uncertain as affluence itself. For example, Pr 14<sup>20</sup>, 'The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends'; Pr 19<sup>7</sup>, 'All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him?'

The explanation of the difficulty seems to lie in an unnoticed Semitism in Lk 16<sup>9</sup>. This verse is part of the material peculiar to the Third Gospel, and, as Easton says in his commentary (*The Gospel according to St. Luke*, Introd. p. xxvii): 'L's style has a strong LXX colouring, and is marked by frequent Semitisms.' Certainly 'the mammon of unrighteousness' is as Hebraistic a phrase as one could expect to find, even in translation Greek. Why, then, has the preceding preposition also not been recognized as a Semitism? ἐκ is a curious word to express 'by means of'; we should expect ἐν, as in Ac 4<sup>9</sup>, 'by what means (ἐν τίνι) this man is made whole.' ἐκ obviously corresponds to the Hebrew and Aramaic מִן. One of the common uses of מִן in the O.T. is in the privative sense, 'without, separated, free from' (Gesenius-Kautsch, 119: w), 'e.g. Is 22<sup>8</sup>, מִן הַבֹּקֶשׁ, 'without the bow they were made prisoners'; cf. Jer 48<sup>45</sup>, מִן הַכֹּחַ, 'without strength.' This מִן is sometimes rendered by ἐκ in the LXX, as in Nu 15<sup>24</sup>, 'if it shall be done without the knowledge of the congregation,' ἐὰν ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν τῆς συναγωγῆς γενηθῇ; Mic 3<sup>6</sup>, 'Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision' (Hebrew מִן הַחֹמָה, Greek ἐξ ὁράσεως); and 'it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine' (Hebrew מִן הַדִּבְרִים, Greek ἐκ μαντείας).

The writer suggests that Lk 16<sup>9</sup> should be translated: 'Make to yourselves friends *without* (or, *apart from*) unrighteous mammon, that, when it fails you (as it is bound to do), they may receive you into the eternal abodes.' That is very similar in purport to: 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal' (Mt 6<sup>20</sup>). It is also a comprehensible comment on the story of the Steward, a 'son of this world,' who *did* make friends *by means of* his shrewdness in money matters, to suggest that for 'the sons of light' there is a more excellent way. The sentence will then begin, 'But (not "and") I say unto you,' perhaps another Semitism, the use of *Waw* to intro-

duce an antithetical rather than a co-ordinate clause.  
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## The Text of Romans vi. 13 in the Chester Beatty Papyrus.

IN the Chester Beatty folio that contains the sixth chapter of Romans about half of each line is missing and has to be restored. This is how vv.<sup>12, 13a</sup> are restored in Sir Frederic Kenyon's superb edition of the Papyri:

μη ουν βα

σιλευτω η αμαρτι]α εν τω θνητω υμων  
σωματι εις το υ]πακουειν αυτη και πα  
ριστανετε τα μελ]η υμων οπλα αδικιας  
τη αμαρτια αλλα π]αραστησατε εαυτους τ[ω  
θω

It will be noticed that, according to this restoration of the text, Paul tells his readers to present their members unto sin as weapons of unrighteousness, for it is not likely that the force of the μή at the beginning of v.<sup>12</sup> persists as far as the word παριστάνετε in v.<sup>13</sup>.

If this restoration is correct—as it very well may be—we must suppose that the scribe has mistakenly written καί for the μηδέ which is found (or implied) in all other authorities.

But it may be worth while to point out that a slightly different restoration is possible. It may well be that immediately after the καί the scribe wrote, not the imperative παριστάνετε, but the infinitive παριστάναι or παριστάνειν. This infinitive would be parallel with the preceding infinitive ὑπακούειν, and the text as thus restored would give good sense.

This suggested restoration would provide an entirely new reading in Ro 6<sup>13</sup>; but that, of course, is no proof that the scribe of this manuscript did not write the infinitive.

It might be objected that ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε εαυτοὺς κτλ. should be preceded by the negative injunction μηδέ παριστάνετε. But surely the positive injunction may be meant to balance the clause μὴ βασιλεύτω ἡ ἁμαρτία κτλ. at the beginning of v.<sup>12</sup>. In that case the rendering would be: 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it and present your members unto sin as weapons of unrighteousness. Rather present yourselves unto God.' Compare the force of ἀλλά in 3<sup>31</sup>.

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### John iv. 44.

A CORRESPONDENT last year in the November number of *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES* offers an explanation of the difficulty of this passage by transposing the verses hereabouts. In *The Congregational Quarterly* last April I offered an alternative solution of the difficulty. The difficulty entirely disappears on the supposition that the paragraph 21<sup>1-12</sup> has got displaced and that these verses should be inserted between 4<sup>43</sup> and 4<sup>44</sup>. Thus: 'Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. . . . After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren and disciples; and they continued there not many days. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.' Hereupon follows the visit to Jerusalem for the passover. And, later on, when He returns to Galilee, we read that the Galileans received Him, having seen all things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast.

I explained, in the article referred to, that this solution depends upon a stichometrical analysis of the structure of the N.T. books. I believe it is demonstrable that the customary unit of Greek prose-writing up to the time of the N.T. (*i.e.* probably until the scroll-book gave way to the codex) was a column of 28 στίχοι, the στίχος being a line of thirty-six letters, the prose equivalent of the hexameter.

The application of this stichometrical test solves countless textual difficulties both in the N.T. and elsewhere. These early chapters of John, like so much more of the N.T., are badly dislocated, and the present sequences are not those of the original book. By the stichometrical test the original sequences can be recovered, and the N.T. writings restored to complete lucidity and coherence.

The above is but one illustration out of a whole multitude that might be produced.

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### A Note on Genesis xxi. 7-11.

GN 12<sup>10-20</sup> (J), 20 (E), and 26<sup>7-11</sup> (J) are generally regarded as variants; and the fact that two occur in J is one of the main reasons for the theory of two strata in J's Abraham narratives. There seem, however, to be good grounds for regarding 26<sup>7-10</sup> (without v.<sup>11</sup>) as an interpolation dependent on 12<sup>10-20</sup> and 20: (1) The youthful beauty of Rebekah

in 26<sup>7-10</sup> is already long past in 25<sup>27-34</sup> (J). (2) The story seems to interrupt the sequence of 26 (cf. Skinner, *Genesis*, 365: 'It is . . . natural to consider vv.<sup>12ff.</sup> the continuation of v.<sup>6</sup>; indeed, it might fairly be questioned whether vv.<sup>7-11</sup> is not a later insertion, interrupting the continuity of the main narrative'—an observation which applies with the same force if v.<sup>11</sup> is connected with v.<sup>6</sup> instead of vv.<sup>7-10</sup>). (3) In Jubilees 24<sup>12f.</sup> the story is omitted and, with the usual slight alterations, v.<sup>11</sup> follows on to v.<sup>6</sup>: 'And he dwelt in Gerar three weeks of years. And Abimelech charged concerning him and concerning all that was his, saying . . .' (4) It can hardly be a coincidence that the two phrases which 12<sup>10-20</sup> and 20 have in common both recur in 26<sup>7-10</sup> ('She is my sister' 12<sup>19</sup> 20<sup>2</sup>.<sup>5</sup> 26<sup>7</sup>.<sup>9</sup>; 'What is this that thou hast done unto me?' 12<sup>18</sup>, or 'What hast thou done unto us?' 20<sup>9</sup>, combined in 26<sup>10</sup> as 'What is this thou hast done unto us?'). It is not likely that all three versions should independently choose to reproduce the same two phrases of the original tradition; the most probable explanation, in view of the forms taken by the second phrase, is that 26<sup>7-10</sup> is dependent upon both 12<sup>10-20</sup> and 20. (5) It is difficult not to agree with Gunkel's opinion that this is the latest and most colourless of the three versions. Since J is generally considered to be more primitive than E almost throughout, there is a strong presumption that 26<sup>7-10</sup> is an addition to J coming from a later date than E.

It is worthy of notice also that outside vv.<sup>7-10</sup> this chapter not only does not contradict 12<sup>10-20</sup>, but directly refers to it (26<sup>6</sup>); and that the play on the name Isaac in v.<sup>8</sup> differs from that of either stratum of J (18<sup>12-15</sup> 21<sup>6b</sup>). It seems probable that v.<sup>11</sup> originally followed on to v.<sup>6</sup> and had no reference to any actual molestation of Rebekah; a later redactor, however, inferred, with a misguided subtlety common among early Jewish interpreters, that an incident similar to those of 12<sup>10-20</sup> and 20 had befallen Rebekah also. He therefore inserted v.<sup>7-10</sup>, repeating the story with only one alteration; it was clear from v.<sup>11</sup> that the danger to Rebekah came not from Abimelech, but from the people, and the story was therefore adjusted accordingly.

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### Matthew xi. 25-27: Luke x. 21-22.

THIS logion of Jesus has always constituted a problem. No help in its interpretation is to be



gained from its context, as it appears in different contexts in Matthew and in Luke. It is agreed that it came from 'Q,' but the difficulty has been to fit it into the Synoptic picture of Jesus, and to reconcile it with the Synoptic record of His teaching.

The saying has been taken generally in one of two ways: (1) It has been accepted as a genuine saying of Jesus, and regarded as evidence of His Messianic or Divine consciousness. It is admitted that evidence in such set terms is unique in the Synoptic Gospels, and parallels from the Fourth Gospel are consequently adduced. Streeter remarks that the Fourth Gospel twice says that 'The Father had given all things into his (Jesus') hands.'

(2) Others have treated the saying as an echo of the thought of the Early Church about the Person of Christ. The words are considered as impossible as an actual utterance of the Jesus who speaks in the Sermon on the Mount. The saying represents Jesus as 'similar to a Hellenistic Redeemer god calling men to himself' (Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*). 'In the churches in which the passage arose, the person of Jesus was looked upon in the light of this redemption faith.' Texts which are partial parallels from Hellenistic writings are adduced.

The suggestion here put forward is that these verses are not to be taken as evidence of Jesus' claim to be a supernatural being, as in the Fourth Gospel, nor as evidence of the Christology of the Early Church, but as witness to the prophetic consciousness of Jesus. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is spoken of not only as a teacher or Rabbi, but as a prophet (Lk 7<sup>16</sup>, Mt 21<sup>11</sup>). He accepted the designation for Himself (Lk 4<sup>24</sup> 13<sup>33</sup>).

Two things are characteristic of the Old Testament prophets—a consciousness of being called, and a claim to speak as the voice of Yahweh. 'Thus saith the Lord' is the note of the prophetic utterance. Consequently the prophet, although he often avoids autobiography, necessarily has to speak about himself. (See, e.g., Am 7<sup>15</sup>, Is 6<sup>9</sup>, 10, Jer 1<sup>5</sup>, 7, 10, Ezk 2<sup>3</sup>, Is 61<sup>1-8</sup>). Now if we could overhear the prophet's prayers, we should hear something like this: 'Thou doest nothing but revealest thy secret to thy servant (cf. Am 3<sup>7</sup>), thou didst reveal thyself in mine ear (cf. Is 22<sup>14</sup>), thou hast anointed me to preach . . .' (cf. Is 61<sup>1</sup>). And if the prophet were to announce his commission and revelation to others he would declare: 'The Lord knew me before I was born, and sanctified me and appointed me (cf. Jer 1<sup>6</sup>), and sent me to the children of Israel, to be his mouthpiece' (cf. Ezk 2<sup>3</sup>, 4). This sounds like

self-exaltation. But it is not arrogance, but a part of the prophet's message.

In the Synoptic passage under consideration we have sayings of Jesus in both these forms of utterance—a prayer, thanksgiving for the revelation; and then a declaration of the source of the revelation. Admitting that the prophetic consciousness of Jesus goes far beyond that of the Old Testament prophets, we can yet see that there is nothing here which could not be uttered by the greatest of the prophets, in a moment of exultation, especially if we accept Harnack's version of the original 'Q' text: 'No one knew the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.'

This mode of treatment throws light also on the invitation, 'Come unto me . . .,' which follows in Matthew's version. The prophet, speaking as the mouthpiece of God, sometimes omits the introductory 'Thus saith the Lord' (as in Is 61<sup>8</sup>), and speaks his revelation in the first person. This is what Jesus does here: 'This is my revelation of the Father, who says, Come unto me . . .' Here also Jesus is speaking, not like the Johannine Christ, nor like a Greek mystery-religion deity, but like an Old Testament prophet.

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### 'Healing' in the Book of Proverbs.

IF a spiritual healer with some knowledge of Hebrew were to work through the Old Testament in the original, he or she would probably find many passages in which the text has been misunderstood. This occurred to me on re-reading the Book of Proverbs in Hebrew. In nine passages I observed a noun derived from the verb 'to heal' occurs, and, although its form implies an active sense 'healing,' it is translated in such a way as to indicate a less active potency like 'remedy,' or a passive state like 'health.' Let me quote first the translations of the Revised Version and then give my own renderings.

In Pr 3<sup>8</sup> we read: 'It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.' A better translation would be: 'It shall be a healing to thy navel, and refreshment to thy bones.' In Pr 4<sup>22</sup> we read: 'For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.' A better translation would be: 'For they are life unto those that find them, and a healing to their whole body.' The words of divine wisdom imparted by a



father give life and bring healing. In Pr 6<sup>15</sup> we read: 'Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; on a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy.' A better translation would be: 'Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken, and there shall be no healing.' Disaster may overtake a worthless and iniquitous man so suddenly that there is no opportunity for healing.

In Pr 12<sup>18</sup> we read: 'There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.' A better translation would be: 'There are those who speak rash words (which cut) like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of a wise man brings healing.' A wise man or woman speaks healing words of divine wisdom. Pr 13<sup>17</sup> reads: 'A wicked messenger falleth into exile; but a faithful ambassador is health.' A better translation would be: 'A wicked envoy falls into evil; but a faithful ambassador brings healing.' The word translated 'envoy' often means 'angel.' The passage, therefore, perhaps amounts to saying: 'A bad angel falls into evil; but a good angel brings healing.' In Pr 14<sup>30</sup> we read: 'A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy is the rottenness of the bones.' A better translation would be: 'A healing mind gives life to the body:

but jealousy corrodes the bones.' 'Heart' in Hebrew commonly means 'mind.' In Pr 15<sup>4</sup> we read: 'A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit.' A better translation would be: 'A healing tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is destructive of the breath (*i.e.* of the breath of life).' In Pr 16<sup>24</sup> we read: 'Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.' A better translation would be: 'Pleasant words are a honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and healing to the body.' 'Bone' in Hebrew often means 'body.'

Lastly, in Pr 29<sup>1</sup> we read: 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be broken, and that without remedy.' A better translation would be: 'A man of reproofs who stiffens his neck shall be broken suddenly, and there shall be no healing.' In other words, a man who is always reproving others, or a man who is continually subject to reproof, and who obstinately refuses to amend his ways, may suddenly be overtaken by calamity without hope of healing.

Thus, the translators, not understanding the use of the word 'healing' in these passages, seem to have gone out of their way to find meaningless substitutes.

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## Entre Nous.

### Church of England Doctrine.

As we go to press, the Report of the Commission, appointed in 1922, is published. In his Introduction the Archbishop of York, the Chairman, says: 'The Commission was appointed because the tensions between different schools of thought in the Church of England were imperilling its unity and impairing its effectiveness.' In a number of cases the Report expresses the view that varieties of doctrine should be tolerated. In his Introduction, Dr. Temple emphasizes the distinction 'between the judgment that such-and-such an opinion is incompatible with the Christian faith or the Anglican tradition, and the judgment that such-and-such a person, who holds an opinion thus condemned, should be excluded from the exercise of office or of membership in the Church.'

### The Virgin Birth.

'Many of us hold that belief in the Word made flesh is integrally bound up with belief in the Virgin Birth, and that this will increasingly be recognized. There are, however, some among us who hold that a full belief in the historical Incarnation is more consistent with the supposition that our Lord's birth took place under the normal conditions of human generation.'

In his Introduction Dr. Temple says: 'I think it right here to affirm that I wholeheartedly accept as historical facts the Birth of our Lord from a Virgin Mother, and the Resurrection of His physical body from death and the tomb. And I anticipate, though with less assurance, that these events will appear to be intrinsically bound up with His Deity when the relations between the spiritual and physical



elements in our nature are more completely understood.'

### The Bible.

Its inspiration is inferred from the character of its contents, all of which do not stand on the same spiritual level. The Bible is the chief source of guidance for spiritual life.

Dr. Temple says :

'We fully acknowledge the supremacy of Scripture as supplying the standard of doctrine ; and we try to indicate how Scripture should be regarded in this connexion : every one knows that it is possible to quote texts which, torn from their context, may be presented as supporting entirely unchristian opinions. Short of that, every one knows that most heretics have been convinced that they were conscientiously following and interpreting Scripture. Our attention must be fastened on the trend of Scripture as a whole and upon its climax in the record of the Word made flesh, by the light of which all the rest is to be interpreted ; in that concentration of attention and in that interpretation our best guide is the continuous stream of universal Christian tradition.'

### What is a Good Sermon?

Principal Wheeler Robinson answers the question in *The Baptist Quarterly* (January 1938). A good sermon, he says, is that which utters 'the personal conviction of a great truth, intelligibly expressed and applied, and imparted with the dignity of a Word of God.' Four points then are made :

(1) Vital religion needs the vitamin of conviction, and most of all does the vital religion of one who would be an ambassador of Christ. Emerson, in a 'Lecture to Divinity Students,' recalls how he once entered a church whilst the snow was falling. 'The snow-storm was real: the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived or acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession—namely, to convert life into truth—he had not learned.'

(2) Good preaching must deal with great truths, and not with mere trivialities. This generation thirsts for something better than it is getting.

As Mr. J. B. Priestley writes in *They Walk in the City*: 'They are no longer children of God and

are not yet contented and unwondering big bees and ants . . . they still feel that there are mysteries, vast unfathomable gulfs in which birth, love, death are created out of darkness and inexplicable light, but now they are out of touch with any possible explanation of these mysteries, any explorations of these gulfs ; the old accounts of these things they instinctively reject, the new have not arrived ; and no sooner does anything of real importance happen, something that a dynamo or an internal combustion engine cannot work, than they are back in the wilderness with only the bleached bones of prophets to comfort them.'

(3) The third feature of a good sermon is intelligible expression. Stopford Brooke, writing to one of his children with literary ambitions, said : 'What you children need to learn is that when you have an idea you must shape it, shape it, SHAPE IT.' When we listen to a wireless talk by Sir James Jeans on astronomy, or by Sir William Bragg on physics, we may easily forget that the apparent simplicity is a work of great art, partly in the selection of illustration, partly in the choice of language. How the great masters have toiled over their language to get the exact expression of what they would give to others !

(4) The sermon belongs to that unity we call worship, and must have the fitness and dignity which characterize true worship. Neither preachers nor hearers always sufficiently remember what worship really is. It is 'worth-ship,' the humble and grateful recognition of God's worth. It depends, therefore, on what we give rather than on what we get. If the thoughts of the congregation, as it individually bows the head on entering a church, could be flashed on a great screen, we should have a test of the worship-value of that congregation. All the elements of the religious service ought to be subdued to the one central fact—that something is being offered to God.

### Bantu Vignettes.

In *Children of the Veld* (James Clarke ? 6s. net), Mr. Robert H. W. Shepherd, M.A., of Lovedale, says little about himself, but the reader is drawn to Mr. Shepherd, cannot help liking him. 'Over thirty years before, after a long and arduous school and university career that left him with the tastes of a scholar, he had found himself dumped on a rocky hill to start his life-work, living in uncouth and primitive quarters the life of a bachelor missionary among heathen hordes. It had all been his own choice and he never, even in the first raw days, looked back, but there were times when the



contrast between what had been and what was now lit up his face with a rueful smile, and he would sigh for just a little of the comfort he had known.'

*Children of the Veld* consists of a number of short studies of Bantu life and customs—vignettes, Mr. Shepherd calls them, and very charming they are. Mr. Shepherd has the gift of making simple things interesting, and there is humour and pathos in plenty in the sketches. There is, for example, the story of Johnson, a Bantu teacher, who gained at Blythwood Institution a fine reputation for scholarship. He lived in the home village with his illiterate father and mother, and was in charge of the school there. One day Mr. Shepherd had a letter thrust into his hand. The handwriting was Johnson's. 'I give it just as it was written, for of translation there is no need :

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I report that I did not attend school three days owing to sickness that fell at my home. Nobody is sick now. I do not know then whether I should stay away from school, but I am well.

"This sickness has been the cause of my utmost misery, for it took both my parents.—Your obedient servant,  
JOHNSON TINISE."

"This sickness has been the cause of my utmost misery, for it took both my parents." In the hour of its extremity, the heart, the world over, utters the self-same cry.'

In the chapter on Modern Contacts there is a paragraph on church divisions. It would be difficult to find one that would put this mission difficulty more forcibly.

The telephone bell rings. It is a call from the local mission hospital. "There is a patient here," the matron is heard saying, "whose religious denomination we cannot fathom. All that we can get from her is that she belongs to 'Ama-Twenty-four'" (the Twenty-four).

"That is easy," I reply. "She is a member of the Free Church of Scotland—the 'Wee Frees' as they are commonly called—whose original membership was some twenty-four ministers and elders who objected to church union in Scotland in the year 1900."

'I lay down the receiver, thinking of the folly that has brought the melancholy divisions of European Christendom into Africa, and stamped them on the minds of one of the most imitative races on earth. It is calculated that in the Union of South Africa there are now some three hundred different Bantu denominations. Numbers of them bear the most fantastic designations, such as "The Church of God on the Slopes of Mount Zion."

### The Same Sermon.

"The people at the out-stations are complaining," he [an old Bantu Evangelist] announced as the two crossed the veld early one Sunday morning.

"What is the matter?"

"They say you don't give them the same food as you give to those at the main station."

'And so it came to the novice that what would be deemed a shortcoming in another country was in Tembuland a sign of grace—in sermons he must treat the same theme all round.'

### Self-Deification.

Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Christian Century* says :

'It must be admitted, of course, that our Protestant inheritance disintegrates into secularism much more easily than Catholicism does. It must also be admitted that many of our Protestant radical minorities allow themselves to be used as cats-paws and allies of anti-religious radicals without any sense of responsibility toward their religious inheritance and with no sure hold upon the truth which divides them from secularists. They stand against Roman Catholicism but are in danger of becoming enmeshed in Stalin's catholicism. For Stalin is but a secularized version of the Pope. . . . The danger that radical Protestantism may become a too servile ally of secular radicals can be avoided only if our criticism of the Catholic heresy is made, not from the standpoint of secular cynics but from the standpoint of Protestant Christian faith. We will resist all temporal divinities, whether they call themselves popes, kings by divine right or commissars. We will not be under the illusion that we can get rid of this tendency toward self-deification by getting rid of the Catholic faith or the Christian religion. We recognize in it the very quintessence of sin, the tendency of man to make himself God. That we should discover the Christian Church itself as a potential vehicle of this sin will make us the more circumspect in our claims and the more certain that the majesty of God may reveal itself in the destruction of historic Christian Churches as well as in their preservation.'